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TURKESTAN

TURKESTAN:
"The Heart of Asia"

BY

WILLIAM ELEROY CURTIS

AUTHOR OF "ONE IRISH SUMMER," "AROUND THE BLACK SEA," "MODERN INDIA," "THE TURK AND HIS LOST PROVINCES," "TO-DAY IN SYRIA AND PALESTINE," ETC., ETC.

Pictures by John T. McCutcheon

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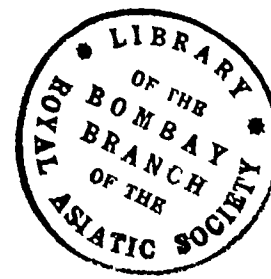

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TURKESTAN

CHAPTER I

A LESSON IN GEOGRAPHY

A LARGE section of the continent of Asia, which has been added to the Russian Empire by conquest within the last half century, is known as Turkestan. It lies south of Siberia, between the Caspian Sea and China, and touches the northern boundaries of Persia, Afghanistan, and India. Its distances are approximately sixteen hundred miles east and west, and about seven hundred miles north and south. Archæologists say that it has been inhabited for ten thousand years by successive races who have cultivated the soil and have raised cattle, sheep, and horses. The first settlers may have come from Mesopotamia, the cradle of our race, but it has been overrun by several human hordes of Chinese, Mongols, Tartars and Turks, who have occupied the territory for centuries at a time, and from there have spread over its western boundaries into Europe. It was known to the ancients as Bactria, and to the Greeks as Scythia; the Romans called it Tartary; and it derives its present title from the Turks, who were originally a tribe of nomadic Chinese, and were masters of the desert until they passed on across the Bosphorus. The residue that remained are known as Turkomans.

When the Russian conquest began in the '60's, Turkestan was divided into several independent khanates, governed by khans or emirs, which were conquered one after another and consolidated into a single province, under a viceroy, whose capital is the city of Tashkend, in the foot-hills of the Chinese mountains, twelve hundred miles east of the Caspian Sea.

At several periods in their history the inhabitants of Turkestan have reached a high degree of wealth and culture. The latter part of the XIVth and the former part of the XVth centuries was probably their golden age, but war and neglect and misrule have left only a few ruins to remind the present generation of the prosperity and splendour of the past. It is now a closed country, a military despotism governed by the army of Russia, with a few civilians in charge of the finances and other peaceful departments. Foreign immigration is prohibited; foreign visitors are not desired.

By permission of the Russian Minister of War, I spent the spring and early summer months of 1910 in Turkestan, for the purpose of writing a series of letters which were published in the Chicago *Record-Herald* and other newspapers, and, with the approval of Mr. H. H. Kohlsaat, the editor, they are offered in permanent form in this volume.

The readers are indebted to Mr. John T. McCutcheon of Chicago for the admirable illustrations, which are made from Kodak pictures taken by him in the summer of 1906.

I acknowledge with pleasure my great obligations to Baron Rosen, Russian Ambassador to the United States, for letters of introduction, and especially for an open letter of commendation which was of the greatest service to me on

several occasions when my identity and intentions were the subject of police investigation. Mr. Nicholas Tcharykow, the Russian Ambassador to Constantinople, also gave me helpful letters and much valuable information. Mr. W. W. Rockhill, United States Ambassador to St. Petersburg, was good enough to obtain for me the permit from the Minister of War, which was absolutely necessary. Without it we would not have been allowed to land at Krasnovodsk.

There are three ways to get to Turkestan — one by railway from St. Petersburg and Moscow over the Great Siberian road to Samara, and then southward by way of Orenburg to Tashkend, Samarkand, and Bokhara. Through sleeping cars run once a week from Moscow to Andijan, the eastern terminus of the Central Asia Railway.

A more interesting route would take you through the Cossack country in the valley of the Don, and along the northern side of the Caucasus Mountains to Baku, where steamers cross the Caspian Sea to Krasnovodsk, the western terminus of the Central Asia Railway.

A still more interesting route, and the one we followed, is to take a steamer at Constantinople, cruise along the north coast of Turkey, visiting Trebizond, the capital of an ancient empire, and several other interesting places, to the terminus of the steamship line at Batoum. From there we crossed the Caucasus by rail to Baku, a distance of five hundred miles, stopping at Tiflis, a most interesting city, from which a détour can be made to Erivan, at the foot of Mt. Ararat, a comfortable journey of eighteen hours by rail. From Baku we crossed the Caspian Sea to Krasnovodsk.

There is a large fleet of small vessels on the Caspian Sea, exclusively under the Russian flag. The largest, which are named in honour of two famous generals, Skobeleff and Kuropatkin, are twin-screw steamers, with electric steering apparatus and about 3,000 tons burden, but the majority are between 1,200 and 1,800 tons, and most of them are old-fashioned side-wheelers, which have been in service for a long time.

All of them have limited accommodations for first and second class passengers, and carry large numbers of third class passengers — Persians, Tartars, Turks, Afghans, Turkomans, Georgians, Armenians, Kalmucks, and other native races — who have a passion for travelling and camp out on the decks with big pillows and thick rugs, their pots and kettles, saddle-bags and baskets, scattered around them. The deck of a Caspian steamer for this reason is one of the most interesting sights you could see in that part of the world, and usually every inch of space is occupied by reclining passengers in picturesque garbs, so that the officers and crew have to step over them when they go about attending to their duties.

Even the first-class passengers are expected to bring their own bedding. The cabins are clean and comfortable, with ordinary bunks and mattresses, but no sheets, blankets, pillows, or towels, although the stewardess will supply them from her own private stock if she is paid extra. It is customary, however, for travellers on railways as well as steamers to carry rolls of bedding, because they will need it at most of the hotels. The custom has probably grown up in that way, just as it has in India. There, outside of Calcutta and Bombay and other large cities, every hotel-

keeper expects his patrons to furnish their bedding and towels, and in the interior your "bearer," or body servant, takes care of your room, and waits on you at the table. The landlord and servants of the hotel leave you entirely to his tender mercies.

Excellent meals are served to the first-class passengers of steamers on the Caspian Sea, but there, as everywhere, the quality of the food and the character of the service vary according to the taste and the refinement of the captain, who is a dictator aboard his craft and has things as he wants them. Our experience was entirely satisfactory. I do not know of a steamer in Europe or the United States, except perhaps those of the Great Northern line on the lakes, on which better meals are served than we had offered to us on the Caspian.

There are several important ports, and the territory and traffic seems to have been divided up among several steamship companies. Baku is the headquarters and starting-point for the southern Caspian, and Astrakhan for the northern coast. A steamer sails every other day from Baku for Persia and visits five of the ports. Resht is the landing place for Teheran, the capital of Persia. The Russians have built a fine road all the distance between them and have established a line of diligences which make the journey in thirty-two hours; but it is a hard trip. The construction of this road, although a universal blessing to everybody who has to travel in Persia, was not entirely a benevolent act, and its chief purpose was to enable the Russian government to throw a military force into the Persian capital promptly whenever needed. The town of Kazvin, which is half way to Teheran, is an important commercial centre,

and has an American school and a missionary settlement.

Other lines of steamers, and a much larger number, ply between Astrakhan, altogether the most important port upon the Caspian, and Krasnovodsk, the terminus of the Central Asia Railway, bringing the supplies needed by at least a hundred thousand troops who are occupying Central Asia, and carrying back cargoes of raw cotton, wool, and other natural products from a territory as large as the Mississippi valley. The Russian manufacturers now depend upon Turkestan for a large amount of their raw cotton and the product is increasing in volume rapidly. Moscow is the source of supply of all kinds of merchandise required in Central Asia, and a paternal government protects the manufacturers against the competition of the rest of Europe.

Tank steamers and barges carry crude and refined petroleum from Baku to Astrakhan and up the Volga River, which is navigable as far as Moscow. The interior of Russia is supplied with its burning fluid in that way. Astrakhan, at the mouth of the Volga, is a city of 200,000 inhabitants, and the centre of a large trade in wool, hides, sheep pelts, and other ranch products. Millions of sheep, cattle, and goats are pastured in that neighbourhood, and the steppe of the Kalmucks, which was formerly one of the wildest sections of the world, is now almost entirely under cultivation with American machinery and produces immense quantities of wheat, barley, and other grains.

Derbend and Petrovsk are both important towns upon the west coast of the Caspian, and a railway passes through them from Baku to Moscow, Odessa, and other parts of Russia. They have their share of the trade and are

well equipped with docks and facilities for loading and unloading.

The Caspian Sea is a strange body of water. The geologists call it "a survival of former oceanic areas," and show us how it was once connected with the Arctic Ocean by the way of the Sea of Aral and the river Obi. There seems to be no doubt of that fact, and it is demonstrated by several interesting signs. The Caspian Sea has seals, herring, salmon, and other marine life which seems to be unmistakable evidence of its former communication with the ocean. At various places along the coast are water lines which show that it was much higher than it is now, and that the depression of its surface to its present level has been gradual through the ages. A slight elevation would again restore connection between the Caspian and the Arctic seas. A rise of 158 feet would bring the Caspian up to the level of the Sea of Aral; a farther rise of sixty-two feet, making 220 feet in all, would turn the waters of both into the Tobol, one of the tributaries of the river Obi, which flows into the polar sea. Between the Caspian and the Arctic Circle is only a low steppe or prairie, with depressions that were undoubtedly once filled with water. Strabo and other ancient geographers describe such communication between the Caspian basin and the northern ocean in unmistakable terms.

The mean level of the Caspian is now eighty-four feet below that of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic. Although it varies with the winter floods and summer droughts, it is gradually subsiding; so gradually, however, that it will take a thousand years or more to exhaust the water. The northern portion is extremely shallow

and is being filled up with silt brought down from the interior of Russia by the Volga, the Ural, and the Kuma, three great muddy streams which traverse the steppes for thousands of miles. They have already converted the northern part of the Caspian into a salt marsh, and are encroaching upon the sea itself every year. The distance in a straight line between the extremes of north and south of the Caspian is 740 miles. The average width is 210 miles, but at one spot the distance is 300 miles across. At one time the Caspian was more than 300 miles longer than at present, and the southern part was 130 miles wider. There are several spots on both coasts where signs of the subsidence appear very plainly; indeed, geologists say that the biography of no body of water, unless it be the Dead Sea, is written in language so clear as that of the Caspian.

There is no outlet, and the drainage area is one of the largest of any body of water. The Volga River, which rises in northern Russia, alone drains an area of more than half a million square miles. The Ural drains the mountains of that name, an area of more than 300,000 square miles. These two rivers bring down more water than the Danube and the Don combined pour into the Black Sea; and on the west coast five great streams, the Kamu, Kur, and the Terek, which drain the Caucasus Mountains, the Arax — the Araxes of Scripture — and the Attruk, which drains the mountains of Armenia, pour enormous volumes of fresh water into the Caspian, which is diluting the original salt water to such an extent that its specific gravity is now only a little more than 1 per cent. This makes the Caspian, to use an Irish bull, the freshest body of salt water in the world. For quite a distance around the mouths of the rivers named

the water is only slightly brackish, but on the eastern coast, which is a hopeless desert lined with bleak and barren mountains, the salt deposits are extensive and the water is very dense.

You can imagine the rapidity of evaporation when I tell you that all the water poured into the Caspian every year is sucked up by the sun. Year after year the average level does not vary much, and is lowered in a slight degree with every passing season. The summer heat is intense, and frequently rises to 110 degrees in the shade, while during the winter a temperature of 30 degrees below zero is not considered remarkable, making a total range of 140 degrees Fahrenheit. The shallow portions of the sea, including about one third of its area, are always frozen over from November to March, and the ice sometimes extends to the middle basin. The southern part, which is much deeper, and where the water is more dense, never freezes.

The Caspian is a stormy sea, particularly between October and March and between July and September, when the gales rage with such violence that navigation has to be entirely suspended for days. The water is usually rough at all seasons; a quiet passage is rare. There are no regular tides, but changes of level occur frequently, because of the atmospheric pressure being greater in one part than in another, the inequality of evaporation, and the floods of fresh water from the inflowing rivers.

A mysterious phenomenon is a current, always perceptible, running at an average rate of three miles an hour. It is about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and its limits are as distinctly marked as those of the Gulf Stream. It is more

rapid in the summer than in the winter season. In periods of extreme heat it has been known to exceed five miles an hour, and in very cold winters it has been known to slow down to a mile and a half an hour. The native boatmen believe that this current is due to a subterranean abyss through which the waters flow either into the Persian Gulf or the Black Sea, a hypothesis for which there is not the slightest justification as long as water will not flow uphill, the mean level of the Caspian being eighty-four feet lower than that of either the Persian Gulf or the Black Sea. Although scientific observers are not entirely agreed in their explanation, the majority of them are convinced that the current is due to an indraught produced by the excess of evaporation in a basin or bay known as the Karaboghaz, on the central part of the eastern coast, about ninety miles across and almost entirely cut off from the main sea by a long, narrow spit of land. The entrance is not more than a thousand feet wide. The Karaboghaz is in a rainless and cloudless region, the area of the greatest extremes of heat as well as the greatest density of salt. Therefore it is natural that evaporation should be more rapid there than elsewhere, and the current is supposed to be caused by the attraction of the water in that direction.

A good deal of salt is taken out of the Caspian Sea — an average of about 400,000 tons every year — but the supply is inexhaustible because around it, particularly on the northern coast, are innumerable little salt lakes. They are supposed to have been at one time a part of the sea, and being left isolated by its subsidence gradually dried up by the action of the sun. Big beds of rock salt are sometimes found at the bottom of these little lakes, which receive

enough water from the rain, snow, and streams to compensate them for the loss sustained by evaporation. The most notable of the lakes, called Elton, lies about two hundred miles north of the present border of the Caspian, in a depressed area seventy-nine feet below the present level of the Caspian and 160 feet below that of the Black Sea.

For a radius of nearly four hundred miles north of the Caspian Sea the soil of the steppes contains a large admixture of salt, often associated with marl, shells, and fish bone. This leaves no doubt that the waters of the Caspian once covered the locality and in their recession left the sediment behind.

The Sea of Aral, about four hundred miles northeast of the Caspian, is also salt, but has been diluted by floods of fresh water from the Syr Daria (the ancient Jaxartes), which rises in the mountains on the Afghanistan frontier, and the Amu Daria (the ancient Oxus), which rises among the peaks of the Pamirs in Hindu Kush and then descends into the great Turkoman desert to irrigate hundreds of thousands of acres in the oases of Merv and Khiva. A large proportion of both these rivers is withdrawn for irrigation before they reach the Aral Sea, and the supply they bring is not sufficient to keep it up to its normal level, so that, like the Caspian Sea, it is gradually receding.

The topography of the desert shows that the Amu Daria formerly flowed into the Caspian through a furrow which may still be easily followed along the southern border of the Ust-Urt, the great desert through which the Central Asia Railway now runs.

Russian engineers have a scheme to divert a portion of the waters of the Oxus back into its ancient bed and thus

reclaim a large portion of what is now a desert of drifting sand. Like many other deserts, the soil is richly loaded with plant nourishment and produces with great profusion wherever water can be brought to moisten it.

We left Baku on the steamer *Skobeleff* at 8 o'clock in the evening and arrived at Krasnovodsk, the western terminus of the great Central Asia Railway, at 11 o'clock the next morning, after a delightful voyage, without feeling any of the annoyances which have given the Caspian Sea a bad reputation among seasick people. When we approached the dock we saw what looked familiar — a town of one-story whitewashed adobe houses, with wide, dusty streets, precisely like those along the line of the Santa Fé and the Southern Pacific railways in New Mexico and Arizona. If a Tombstone miner should drop down there in the night, he would feel perfectly at home in the morning, especially after the breeze comes up about 11 o'clock and what he is accustomed to call "real-estate activity" begins in the dusty streets. Krasnovodsk also resembles the mining towns on the nitrate coast of Chile, especially where the gloomy, barren mountains come down to bathe their feet in the water.

As far as you can see in every direction there is nothing but rock and sand. There is not a green thing within miles and miles of the place except a few struggling cottonwood trees that have been planted in a little park and are kept alive by constant irrigation. The water supply is furnished by companies which condense the contents of the Caspian Sea into vapour, as people are said to distill whiskey from corn, extract the salt, and sell the purged water by the quart and gallon from house to house as milk is sold in America.

Two or three hundred feet above the town, in a little crack in the mountain side, is a group of three iron tanks, put there as a safety reservoir and kept filled with water to be used in case a fire should break out upon the docks. Lines of hose are stretched through the different warehouses, but so far they have never been needed. There has been no damage of consequence from fire since the town was built.

Most of the houses are one story, with thick walls surrounding patios in the Spanish style, which experience has demonstrated is the coolest and most comfortable for a tropical climate. The exteriors of the houses are washed with blue, green, red, yellow, and other bright colours, in order to make the place look as cheerful as possible, and two or three government buildings have been raised to two stories.

There is no hotel, but stranded travellers who have no friends to entertain them can find lodgings in what are called "Numeras," a name applied throughout Turkestan to houses where lodgings are let. Several respectable-looking restaurants supply meals, but altogether the best place is the railway station, where excellent luncheons and dinners are served. Unlike corresponding towns in America there are no saloons, gambling houses, dance houses, or other disreputable resorts. Krasnovodsk is strictly a "dry town." The soldiers, sailors, railway employes, and dock-wallopers who furnish the greater part of the population are entirely protected from the temptations to which we permit the working classes in our frontier towns to be exposed. And, what is still more remarkable, Turkestan is a prohibition country.

Except in Bokhara, which is nominally an independent khanate still, Central Asia is "dry" in more senses than

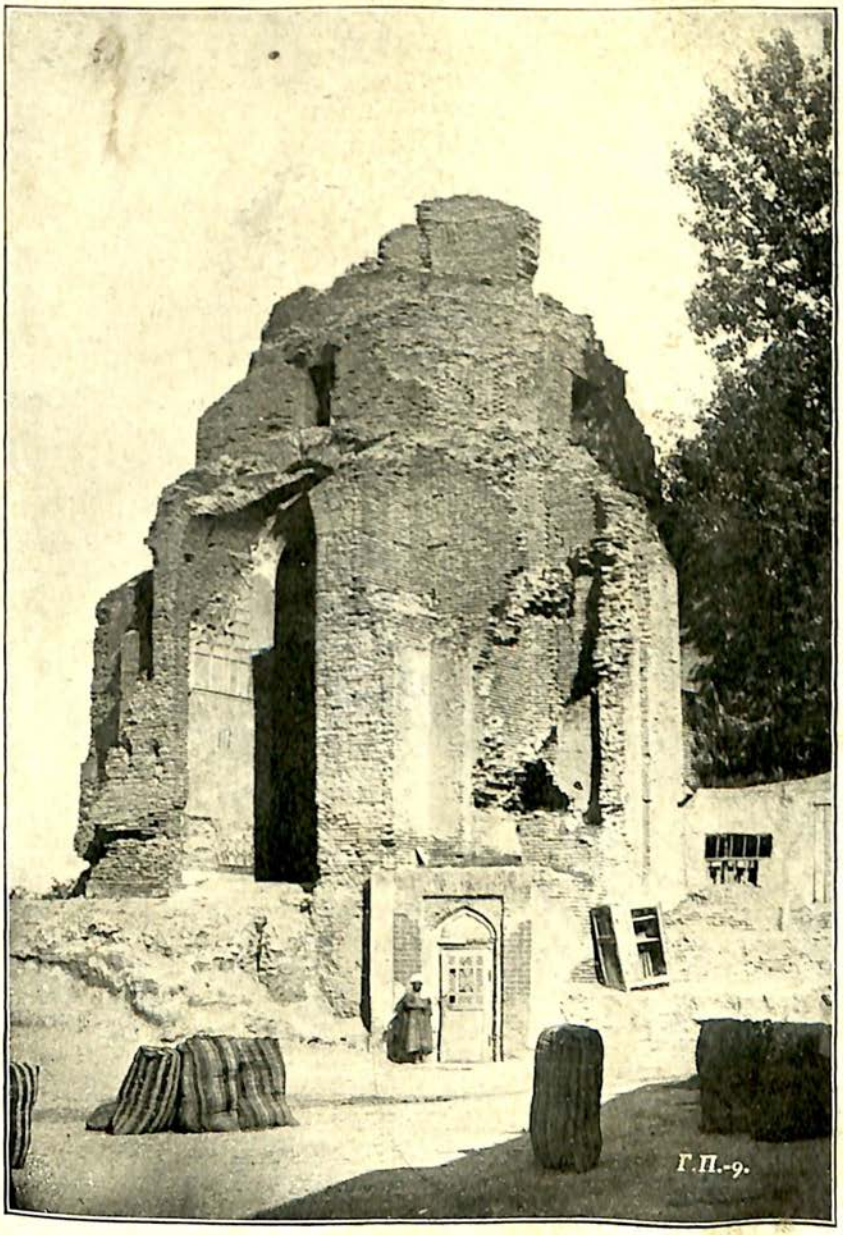
one. The native races have not been allowed to acquire European vices.

There are excellent bathing establishments along the shore of the Caspian, with clean and commodious dressing rooms, and stairs that lead down into the water. There is a hard, sandy bottom, but very little surf, and every one is surprised because the water is not salty. It is only brackish.

There is deep water close to the shore, which of course is a great advantage to shipping, and long piers extending out into the sea are covered with warehouses filled with military supplies and merchandise brought down from Moscow and other parts of Russia by boats on the Volga River. These are to be sent to Samarkand, Bokhara, Tashkend, Andijan, and other cities in Central and Eastern Asia, to be distributed among the native tribes as far as the Chinese border, even across into Persia, British India, Afghanistan, and Thibet.

The outgoing freight brought down on long trains from Central Asia is piled up neatly, awaiting shipment. Vast stacks of baled cotton are on their way from Tashkend and the Merv oasis to the mills of Moscow and other manufacturing towns of Russia. It will be carried by steamers to Astrakhan and there trans-shipped upon barges to be towed up the Volga River. There are immense quantities of wool and hides in bales destined for England, Germany, and even for the United States; for cotton, wool, and skins are the chief products of Central Asia and the most profitable. There is much rice also, but that is nearly all consumed in the cities around the Caspian Sea.

I noticed a good deal of railway construction material



MAUSOLEUM OF BIBI KHANUM, WIFE OF TAMERLANE, AT SAMARKAND, ERECTED ABOUT THE YEAR 1400.

piled up along the docks, which indicates that the system is being extended; and there are rumours of new tracks being laid from certain points upon the main line of the railroad to the borders of Persia, Thibet, and Afghanistan. But that is a secret which the Russians are trying to conceal, because England is so jealous of her Asiatic territory and is almost frightened out of her wits whenever she sees the cap of a Russian soldier approaching boundary lines.

Immense quantities of sugar, coffee, hardware, furniture, cotton fabrics, and the other necessaries of life are shipped into Asia by Krasnovodsk, for that is the only port of entry for a vast territory and the chief outlet for the products of between 10,000,000 and 12,000,000 people. The natives are beginning to need modern merchandise. They are acquiring a taste for foreign goods, and are thus providing a market of great value for the manufacturers of Russia, which is of course a very important consideration for a government. And there are at least 2,000,000 Russian emigrants living on the line of the Central Asia Railway whose wants must be supplied.

Therefore Krasnovodsk is a busy as well as an important town, and one of the most important in all Asia, although it is only a railway terminus and a military station and has nothing but manufactured water to drink. It was created for a single purpose, and no one would live there unless he were compelled to do so. The labouring element are Persians and Tartars and make good hands. They are energetic, muscular and willing, and are paid about thirty cents a day in our money. The machine and repair shops of the railway are manned by Russians and Armenians, more than one thousand in number. Nearly all the cars used on

the Central Asia Railway are made in the shops there, but the locomotives are brought from Moscow in sections.

There is a garrison of about two thousand men, which constitutes almost one-half the population. During working hours, when the labouring element are busy, almost every person you meet upon the street is a soldier. There are a few shops where the necessaries of life are sold, and the people get as much pleasure out of existence as they can, although conditions are not encouraging.

CHAPTER II

THE CENTRAL ASIA RAILWAY

SHORTLY after the Russian occupation of Turkestan in 1865, the necessity of a railway for the transportation of troops and supplies was realized and various plans were suggested. In 1873 Ferdinand de Lesseps submitted to Alexander II the details of a scheme for a line from Moscow to Calcutta, a distance of about five thousand miles; that portion which lay west of India to be built by Russia and the remainder by England. De Lesseps formed a company with French capital to undertake the preliminary surveys, and the Russian government gave him a concession for six years while he unfolded the scheme, with the promise of a charter and a liberal guarantee. But the British government declined to concur in the project. When the French engineers reached the frontier of Afghanistan they were prohibited from proceeding farther and returned to Europe. After a prolonged controversy De Lesseps dropped the project and transferred his attention to the Panama Canal.

The necessity was too great, however, to permit the enterprise to be abandoned. In 1879 Russian military engineers surveyed the first section to Merv, and in 1880 General Skobeleff, who had been appointed commander-in-chief, was given carte blanche to go ahead with construction, which was completed to Samarkand in 1885 and to

Andijan in 1892. An American contractor named Berry offered to build the first section at his own expense with material from the United States, and operate it upon completion for an annual guarantee of $750,000; but, as the road was required for military purposes chiefly, the goverment rejected his proposal, and General Anenkoff, comptroller of the transport department of the Russian army, who had charge of all the transportation arrangements during the war with Turkey, was directed to take charge of the work.

The Central Asia Railway runs from Krasnovodsk, on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, to Andijan, on the western boundary of the Chinese Empire, a distance of 1,256 miles. Two hundred miles west of Andijan the track branches off northward to Tashkend, the capital of Russian Turkestan, and the residence of the viceroy, and from there extends northward and westward along the shores of the Aral Sea to the city of Orenberg, where it connects with the Great Siberian Railway at Samara. It is possible to go by rail from Andijan to Moscow, or to Vladivostok, the Russian port on the Pacific, or Peking or Tien-Tsin. A line has been surveyed from Tashkend eastward to connect with the Great Siberian Railway at Omsk on the northern boundary of China, and sometime it may be built.

The Central Asia Railway extends about halfway across the continent of Asia, over "the roof of the world," and through one of the oldest settled portions of that continent. A scientific commission from the Carnegie Institution at Washington, which spent two years among the ruins and the deserts of Khiva and Kizil-Kum and through the oases of Merv, Bokhara, and Samarkand, estimates from the

archæological evidences that this section of the earth's surface has been cultivated by human beings with cattle and horses for at least ten thousand years, and that several "cultures" or periods of civilization have succeeded each other, each with its own individuality.

The principal cities along the line are Askabad, which is the capital of the Russian province of Trans-Caspia; Merv, which is surrounded by twenty square miles of ruins; Charjui, Bokhara, Samarkand, Kokand, Andijan, and Tashkend. There are altogether eighty-five stations, but most of them are for the convenience of the military management rather than for the accommodation of the public.

Passing southeastward from Krasnovodsk on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, the track follows the northern boundary of Persia for two hundred miles. It is only thirty miles across to that historic country and from the station at Askabad a fine wagon road has been built to the sacred city of Meshed for the accommodation of multitudes of pilgrims who visit that place every year to venerate the Saint Ali Rizi, eighth in descent from the Prophet, who lies in a large tomb covered with silver gilt.

After leaving Persia the track trends northeastward to Bokhara and then follows an almost direct easterly course to the Chinese border.

At Merv a branch line runs down to a place called Kushk on the frontier of Afghanistan, where the Russians have fortified themselves and maintain a large garrison of troops. It is only a short distance from Herat, the second important city in Afghanistan, and the Russian military authorities are always ready to throw a force of infantry, artillery, and cavalry over the line at a moment's notice. This fact is the

cause of great nervousness in India and with the British government. Afghanistan is a bumper between Russia and England, and while the emir is theoretically under a protectorate of England, it would be convenient for Russia to interfere with the situation in a very serious manner if England should attempt to make the relations any closer.

Other branch roads are contemplated and surveyed, and the material for their construction is piled up at convenient places whenever it may be needed. England is the only power that Russia fears, and although their relations at present are entirely friendly, and they have an amicable understanding concerning the control of Persia, what diplomatists call "eventualities" are possible at any time, and the aggressive policy of Russia is no secret to the world. The Central Asia Railway and its branches are intended to aid and extend Russian supremacy in the East, just as they were built to aid in the subjugation of the native rulers who governed what is now called Turkestan.

There were half a dozen or more independent khanates, each governed by a khan, with capitals at Khiva, Merv, Samarkand, Charjui, Kokand, and other cities along the line of the road, which, one by one, were conquered and annexed to the Russian Empire and now compose the territory on the modern maps covered by the word Turkestan. The khanate of Bokhara is still nominally independent and remains so because the emir, who realized that submission was the better part of valour, invited a protectorate instead of a battle. He has since been allowed to maintain a show of independent authority under the advice of a Russian general.

The most interesting of all the khanates thus conquered

and annexed was Samarkand, the home, the birthplace, and the tomb of Tamerlane, or Timour, the great Tartar chieftain, who once conquered half the world and ruled an empire extending from the Danube to the Ganges and from the Mediterranean to the Bay of Bengal. The khan of Samarkand was foolish enough to resist the Russians and lost his life, and the proudest capital in Asia is now ruled by a Russian general.

Within this immense area are various climates and meteorological conditions. For a larger part of the distance the railway runs through deserts, but wherever water is poured upon the soil it produces profusely. The hillsides are covered with flocks and herds and the oases are now producing immense crops of fine cotton from American seed, which has been introduced by the Russian government.

There are no general industries, but the women of every household are always engaged at the loom, and produce the finest rugs and carpets that are made outside of Persia. The Bokhara rugs are known to everybody. From this territory come those pelts of fine curly black wool so much in favour for women's wraps, known as Persian lamb. Charjui is the centre of the trade, and trainloads of lamb-skins are shipped from there and neighbouring towns to Moscow, London, and other distributing points.

The extremes of temperature are very great. Cyrus the Younger, boasting of Persia, said:

"My father's kingdom extends so far to the south that men cannot live there because of the heat, and so far to the north that they cannot live there because of the cold."

This is a fair description of the contrast between the torrid summers on the Persian Gulf and the frigid winters in the

mountains of Kara Dagh and other points in northern Persia; and the same might be said of Turkestan. In the winter the tracks of the railway have to be protected by snowsheds, and in the summer the heat is terrific and almost intolerable.

There was great difficulty in constructing the railway because of the drifting sand, which lies in loose hillocks in several places upon the desert and drifts about with the breeze without regard to railway trains or caravans. The grains are so fine that the sand is difficult to handle. It cannot be transported in a car because the motion of the train creates such a breeze that it is blown away. And it cannot be shovelled because it is so light that a breath will scatter it in every direction. A similar difficulty prevails upon the Oregon Railway and Navigation tracks along the Columbia River in Oregon and on the Southern Railway in Peru. The track is a five-foot gauge, uniform with the railways of European Russia. Most of the ties are of iron and the rails are sixty-pound steel.

It is entirely a military road. It was surveyed and built and is managed by soldiers. Civilians have been employed as surveyors, architects, and engineers, but not only was the construction intrusted to a lieutenant-general, the famous Annenkoff, but the larger part of the manual labour was performed by military battalions selected for their aptitude or experience in railway work. The engineers are old soldiers; the station masters and attendants are veteran officers or enlisted men who have been wounded in battle; the guards, conductors, ticket collectors, telegraph operators, and all other employes are detailed from the army or are on the retired or reserve list.

The unskilled labour was performed by Turkomans, Bokhariots, Sarts, and other natives, who were paid good wages, and their employment had a great deal to do with the rapid pacification of the country. The rolling stock, rails, and all other materials came from Russia, most of it from Moscow, because there is no timber or other material to be had on the ground; and the scarcity of water was another serious embarrassment. Artesian wells were failures. Pipes have been laid from the mountains across the desert wherever it is possible, and more than a thousand tank cars are still in use transporting water where it cannot be otherwise obtained.

There are three tremendous rivers, but only fifty-six bridges in all for a distance of 1,200 miles, including those over the ditches and dry water-courses. The largest bridge, about a mile and a half long, is that which crosses the ancient Oxus River, now known as the Amu Daria, near the city of Charjui, and there is another at Merv over the Murghab.

The station houses are solid structures of stone of attractive architecture, with long platforms always crowded with curious natives, for the iron horse and the vehicles it hauls have never lost their interest. All of the principal stations are provided with excellent restaurants and conveniences in the way of hot water, bread, and other simple foods for third-class passengers.

The trains run very slowly, the fastest not more than twenty miles an hour; the track is solid and smooth; the cars are large and luxurious, and to each of the through express trains a primitive dining car is attached, which is not attractive in appearance but is of great convenience. The bill of fare is not suited to epicures, but people who are not

too particular can get plenty of fresh eggs, good bread, and excellent coffee and tea.

The railway station at Krasnovodsk is a handsome building of Oriental and therefore appropriate design, with arabesque treatment of the roof and built of alternate courses of dark and light gray stone. A wide terrace with a balustrade overlooks the tracks where the people gather daily to see the trains go out. It is the one diversion of an otherwise barren town. The express train for Tashkend leaves at 8 o'clock in the evening, local time, and a convenient hour for everybody. The men folks have finished their work and eaten their suppers, and it is not yet time to put the babies to bed. They all come down — men, women, and children — to gossip and watch the strangers and spend an hour or so in the cool twilight.

I do not understand why the railway management makes up its schedules on St. Petersburg time, for there is two hours' difference, but for the convenience of the public the clocks in the station houses are rigged with two sets of pointers; one painted black, which represents the railway, and the other red, which indicates the local time.

Several years ago, while riding about the city of Savannah during a wait of a couple of hours between trains, I happened to look up at the clock in a church steeple, noticed that I had only a few minutes to spare before my train left, and directed the old coloured driver to hurry. He replied that we had more than an hour to spare, and in answer to my inquiry explained:

"We has two kinds of time in Savannah, boss; de standard time and de Mediterranean time. De cyars runs by de standard time, but de people ob de town gits

up and goes to bed by de Mediterranean time, which am de time ob de sun."

In Turkestan there is a similar practice. The inhabitants rise and shine by meridian time and the railway trains run by St. Petersburg time.

There is an excellent restaurant in the station at Krasnovodsk, where we were eating a very satisfactory dinner when an imperious young officer, in the uniform of the gendarmes, or imperial Russian police, stepped up and in an arbitrary and insolent manner asked who we were and where we were going, as if we were tramps and he a policeman. We told him we were respectable Americans on our way to Bokhara simply as tourists and showed him our passports and permit, which a very courteous senior officer in charge of that business had pronounced regular and satisfactory. But the subaltern evidently suspected that we had designs upon the peace and tranquility of Turkestan and was determined to avert the danger if possible. We made an effort to satisfy him of our innocence and respectability, but he looked very distrustful as he left the dining room.

Our passports and our permits had been inspected, approved, and returned to us by the officials in charge of such matters, and this young subaltern was informed by the senior officer in command that everything was satisfactory; but his suspicions had been aroused by something about our conduct or appearance, and after we had purchased our tickets to Tashkend he came around again to inquire why we had done so, when we had just told him that we were going to Bokhara, which is only a little more than halfway. We explained that, having found the train so comfortable, we had concluded to continue our journey to the end of the line and to stop at

Bokhara on our return; but he seemed to consider this a suspicious circumstance and made himself very obnoxious by his inquisitiveness. An officer who had been at the same hotel with us at Baku and had crossed the Caspian on the same steamer, put in a good word for us, but the young captain refused to be convinced and, as we learned the next day, telegraphed his suspicions to the chief of the political police at Askabad, which occasioned an exciting little episode.

Turkestan is a closed country. The regulations are very strict about strangers. The Russian government does not want tourists to come to Turkestan, especially newspaper men, and evidently the officials make it as disagreeable as possible for them. All foreigners are unwelcome; commercial travellers from every other country are excluded; no German or Frenchman or Englishman can sell goods there. The trade is protected in an arbitrary manner for the merchants and manufacturers of Moscow and other Russian cities. There are Russian agents of foreign commission houses buying wool, cotton, hides, skins, and other products of the country, and they are never interfered with, because the products of Turkestan must find a market outside of Russia to a certain extent, but Russia can supply all the needs of the people without the aid of foreigners.

The Central Asia Railway is maintained to transport troops and supplies to the Russian possessions in Asia, and no one can pass over it without a special permit in addition to the regular passport, which a foreigner can only obtain through his ambassador at St. Petersburg, from the Minister of War. The Ministry of the Interior has jurisdiction over ordinary passports, but the Central Asia Railway is outside

its jurisdiction and under the control of the War Department. No one can go aboard a steamer on the Caspian Sea or buy a railway ticket or enter a train in Turkestan without an "ocriti lista," as the permit is called, and even then it must first be compared with the duplicate which is forwarded to the police bureau at Krasnovodsk whenever one is issued at St. Petersburg.

Our train consisted of six carriages — one first, one second, and two third class, with a primitive dining car similar to those used with construction trains on American railroads, and a separate kitchen car, which was very much like an American caboose. The locomotive was an oil burner, and a tank car of oil was attached to it, in addition to the tender. The first-class cars are very comfortable, divided into compartments for two and for four passengers, and arranged so that the backs of the long couches used for seats can be lifted and fastened in a horizontal position to make an upper berth. The beds made up this way are just as comfortable as those of a Pullman sleeper. But we had to bring our own sheets, pillow-cases, blankets, and towels, for they furnish nothing of the kind either on the train or in the hotels of Russia, except at St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, and perhaps one or two of the other larger cities.

The conductor, porters, and the policeman who accompanied the train were all very attentive, some of them for political and the others for pecuniary reasons. We were under suspicion from the start. The Russians have a delusion that the British government is possessed of an insatiable curiosity to know what is going on in Turkestan, and no Englishman can cross by the Caspian steamers without being subjected to most annoying espionage. The

officials are too stupid to distinguish between English and Americans, and very few of them are able to read any language but their own; hence, notwithstanding the fact that our passports were issued by the United States government and our permit contained the statement that it was issued to us as Americans at the request of the American ambassador, the police officials were possessed of the notion that we were English spies.

After the train started we made up our own beds, wrapped our steamer rugs around us, and lay down to pleasant dreams. There is no inducement for a passenger to sit up late upon a train, for the compartments are lighted with a single candle, set in a little glass box over the door next to the ceiling, which does not make enough light to throw a shadow. The motion of the train is as soothing as a rocking chair. The speed is never more than twenty miles an hour, the track is smooth, there is no jolting, and what motion there is is as regular as the ticking of a clock.

We wakened early in the morning at the Kizilerrat, 315 versts — or about 225 miles — east of Krasnovodsk, where we saw our first Turkomans, our first kibitka, as the curious tent is called in which they live, and our first camels, which were slowly pacing off the desert in a long caravan over a trail which runs parallel with the railway track. Samovars of hot water and bottles of milk, big piles of bread and bowls of hard-boiled eggs were the first things we saw when we looked out of the window of the train at the station, and these were offered by a row of Russian women with white handkerchiefs tied over their blonde hair, who stood behind tables upon which their wares were spread. And they were well patronized by the third-class passengers.

CHAPTER III

THE TURKOMANS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS

WE SAW our first oasis at Bacharden, a station 426 versts, or about three hundred miles, east of Krasnovodsk, where the platform is surrounded by a glorious grove of locust and mulberry trees. As far as we could see in every direction the earth was green with growing wheat, barley, and other grains; vast fields of alfalfa were ripe and half-naked Turkomans were cutting them with sickles. Several orchards were within view from the car windows as we jogged along, and the contrast between this landscape and that through which we had been passing before we entered the irrigated area was similar to that which a traveller in southern California experiences when he suddenly emerges from the dusty desert into a paradise of orange groves.

The track runs parallel with the boundary line between Russia and Persia, which was fixed by a treaty in 1881, and it is only thirty miles south. The line is marked for three hundred miles or more by two ranges of mountains, the first range, called Kuren Dagh, rising between two thousand and three thousand feet, and the second range, called Kopet Dagh, between six thousand and eight thousand feet, all of the higher peaks being covered with heavy blankets of snow.

On the northern side of the track is a desert called Kara-Kum, which extends seven hundred miles east and west

and about six hundred miles north and south, broken by an occasional oasis or belt of cultivated land wherever water can be turned upon the soil; but few streams are bold enough to venture out of sight of the Persian mountains, because they are so soon swallowed by the thirsty ground. There is a great deal of drifting sand and in winter much snow, and for mile after mile the bare clay is baked so hard by the sun that it will not show a hoof mark; but it is enlivened by a bright green shrub of stunted growth similar to our sagebrush, which is found everywhere on the deserts of Asia. It is called saxoul by the Russians and zak by the natives, who burn it for fuel, and the camels use it for food. The leaves are tough but nourishing and the limbs and trunk and roots make a hot fire.

All this part of Asia was once covered by the Caspian Sea, as is proved by numerous marine fossils that are found embedded in the clay and rocks.

Among the group at the station when the train arrived, was a benevolent-looking old man with a long white beard, an unusually large shako, and a very much soiled dressing gown. He was conspicuous among the rest because of a silver chain worn around his neck, from which a medal was suspended, and two other medals were pinned to his breast. Upon inquiry I found that he is mayor of the town, or the chief of the tribe that lives there, and that the chain and medal are the insignia of his office. He is responsible to the Russian military commander of that district for the good behaviour of all the families in that village and the encampment in that neighbourhood, and this distinction was conferred upon him because of his high character and recognized wisdom.

Crowds of savage-looking barbarians were standing around the platform, as we saw them afterward at all the other stations. We had seen several Turkomans at Baku and at Krasnovodsk and three or four had crossed the Caspian Sea on the same steamer, but they were more or less diluted, so to speak, or corrupted by contact, and these were the real things. They looked very fierce, but we were assured that this was due chiefly to their sheepskin caps of shaggy wool hanging down over their swarthy faces and piercing black eyes.

The Turkomans are of Mongolian origin, are Mohammedans and nomads with large flocks and herds and droves of camels and horses. Like the Bedouins of Arabia they have regular camping places and regular trails and follow the pasturage as the season wanes. They inhabit the western part of Turkestan, along the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, and until they were overcome by the Russians had a government of their own under a khan, or overlord, whose authority was acknowledged by the chieftains of many local tribes and clans. They are entirely illiterate, but are gifted with remarkable intelligence, and many of them have acquired large wealth, which is represented by camels, cattle, horses, sheep, and goats. Their dress is striking and varies according to the wealth and position of the wearer. Their faces are distinctly Mongolian. They have slanting eyes like the Chinese, but resemble the Koreans more closely.

An ordinary Turkoman wears a pair of wide cotton trousers over his bare brown legs, and usually bare feet, although in the winter he puts on boots with high heels and toes which turn up Chinese fashion. He wears no stockings, but winds

strips of woollen cloth around his legs to protect them from cold. In summer the higher classes wear sandals. His shirt of gay colours is usually open to show his hairy breast, and over it he wears a tunic of bright-coloured cotton, which reaches to his knees. And over that again he wears a long garment like an old-fashioned dressing gown of quilted cotton of brilliant colours and conspicuous patterns — yellow, pink, blue, scarlet, and green being the favourite hues. It is made with wide, open, flowing sleeves, Chinese fashion. The richer Turkomans wear silk instead of cotton and present a gorgeous spectacle.

On the head is an enormous shako or cylindrical hat of sheep or lamb's wool, usually very shaggy, and it looks heavy, hot, and greasy. Every man wears a beard. They never shave, except on either side of the lower lip, leaving an imperial. They wear sashes of brilliant colours tied around their waists, in which they carry their valuables.

The Central Asia Railway was originally a military scheme of imperative importance for the subjugation and the Russofication, if I may coin a word, of the inhabitants of the half-dozen or more khanates which composed the territory known as Turkestan, and the commercial consideration was not regarded of importance. But it is now doing an enormous freight business for a distance of more than twelve hundred miles on a direct line for a population of 10,000,000 people, has caused numerous small new towns to spring up, and ancient towns and cities to grow and flourish, and the traffic is increased at almost every station by camel caravans, which bring in produce from the surrounding country on both sides of the track, and carry back merchandise.

Business has developed enormously. It was originally

estimated that the maintenance of the road would cost the war department not less than $200,000 a month, but the freight revenues alone pay for maintenance and the operating expenses. Passenger and freight rates have been made low in order to develop business, especially outgoing traffic and third-class fares in order to tempt the natives to travel. This furnishes a healthful diversion, and is said to have more influence than any other modern innovation the Russians have introduced in civilizing the natives and making them contented. The Central Asia Railway is altogether a remarkable example of the success of government control. All the railways in Russia, including the Great Siberian road, belong to and are operated by the government, and they are as well managed as any railways in the world.

Another important consequence of Russian control has been to put an end to the incessant feuds and fighting between the various tribes, such as used to occur between rival tribes of Indians in the United States. While the term "Turkoman" is applied to the inhabitants of the entire country west of the Oxus River, at least seven distinct peoples are included in that category, each with its own history, individuality, and peculiar customs. They are all Mohammedans, they are all semi-nomadic, and, like the North American Indians and the Bedouins of Arabia, have followed their flocks and herds as the pasturage improved or became exhausted. Each tribe has fixed villages of mud huts, usually beside springs and rivers, where the land can be irrigated and cultivated. Russian influence and discipline and the construction of the railway have preserved peace and have created a larger demand and better prices for everything that the Turkoman tribes produce; and they

have therefore virtually abandoned their nomadic life. The majority have settled in villages, and their flocks and herds are sent out under shepherds and herders like those of the farmers in more civilized countries. Those who stay at home cultivate the fields and engage in other industries. It will not be long before the population, which was entirely migratory twenty-five years ago, is settled in permanent communities.

There are about 2,000,000 Russians in the country, not including 135,000 soldiers. The 8,000,000 natives are not only producing valuable crops, but are beginning to use foreign goods. At the time of the Russian invasion they were almost entirely self-dependent, excepting the caravans from China, which brought tea, and those from Constantinople and Smyrna, which brought cotton goods, hardware, and other merchandise. To-day the wearing apparel of the entire population comes chiefly from Moscow and other Russian manufacturing towns. Very little, except rugs, silk scarfs, and woollen coats, is woven in the country. The owners of flocks get more money out of their wool by shipping it than by working it up at home. And the machine-made goods from Russia are clever imitations of the home-made product. The bazaars of the native towns now handle comparatively few domestic manufactures. Tourists who want examples of Turkestan weavings and embroideries are compelled to search diligently for them, and even then are likely to be deceived by Moscow imitations.

Although there are 2,000,000 Russians in Turkestan, the policy of the government is against immigration. It does not permit foreigners to come in, and Russians are not allowed to compete with natives in the lines of business

which the latter were pursuing before annexation. As an eminent official explained the policy to me, "Immigration is not encouraged, but is permitted." New Russian towns have sprung up along the railway. There is a Russian city, distinct but adjoining every native city of importance, and as many Russians as please can take up their abode and engage in business within its limits, but they cannot settle in the native towns or engage in business there. Newcomers may open up new country, but they cannot buy land that is being cultivated by the natives.

There is plenty of agricultural land, millions and millions of unoccupied acres, which immigrants may purchase at a nominal price and settle upon, but it is necessary for them to provide new irrigation systems. This means the investment of large capital and the introduction of much labour, which the government encourages, and the emperor himself has set an example in developing the cotton industry around Merv, where he has an enormous plantation.

One of the grand dukes has been very enterprising in the same direction, and several companies have been organized at St. Petersburg and Moscow for construction of irrigation systems, the establishment of colonies, and the cultivation of cotton on a large scale, with the ultimate hope that the Russian manufacturers shall not be dependent upon the United States or any other foreign country for their raw material. The success of cotton culture in Turkestan by the Russians has been very much greater than the attempts of Germany and Great Britain in South Africa, and to-day nearly one half of the agricultural population of Turkestan are engaged in the cotton fields, and nearly one half of the raw cotton consumed by the Russian mills comes from that source.

Water and kerosene oil are the largest items of freight on the Central Asia Railway — tank cars filled with refined petroleum from Baku for the firing of the locomotives, and tanks of water hauled from pumping stations on the banks of the two or three rivers that the railroad crosses, for the locomotives, and the people to drink. Raw cotton is the next item in volume of the freight list, and after that wool and hides.

The wisdom of the policy I have described is not to be doubted, and it is in striking contrast with the history of our relations with the aborigines of our soil and that of the English in South Africa. An autocracy can thus be made exceedingly useful, for without dictatorial powers it would have been impossible to have carried out such a plan.

I will not attempt to enter into an ethnological description of the Khivans, Kirghiz, Mervis, Sarakhs, Salors, Yutelano, Tekkes, and various other distinct tribes that are included under the generic term of Turkoman, because what is said of one applies generally to the others, although each has its own distinct individuality.

They are becoming settled, as I have said, in permanent villages, each under the immediate control of a native chief, who is responsible to the Russian military commander for the good conduct of his people. Most of them are cultivating the ground and raising cattle, horses, sheep, and camels with remarkable success. Railway stations have been located at frequent intervals convenient to their towns, which, however, are only clusters of adobe houses surrounded by adobe walls, and if a gentleman from Arizona or New Mexico or the northern part of old Mexico should happen to

come out this way he would find himself among familiar scenes.

I suppose all deserts are more or less alike and that the people who dwell in them are apt to do the same thing under the same circumstances. Some years ago I was visiting one of the islands in Lake Titicaca, Peru, where Adolph Bandelier, the celebrated archæologist, was digging among the ruins of the Inca cities and turning up pots and kettles and other things that are almost exactly like those found in the buried cities in Egypt. And when I asked him if it were possible that Peru was settled by Egyptians, he explained that human beings of whatever race and of all ages felt the same needs and had the same requirements, and, as their intelligence was cultivated, developed the same tastes and ideals. Therefore under the same circumstances they would be apt to do the same thing whether they lived in Egypt or in the heart of the Andes. That explains the similarity between the products, the buildings, the arts, and habits of the Chinese, the Aztecs of Mexico, the Mayas of Yucatan, the Incas of Peru, and the other native races of America with those of the older cultures of Syria, Central Asia, and Egypt.

And that explains why this country, in the heart of Asia, resembles the high plateaus of Chihuahua so closely and reminds the traveller continually of Arizona, New Mexico, and the southern half of California. The surface of the ground is incrusted with alkali; the barren ranges of mountains along the border of Persia in the distance are covered with snow, and every now and then the train passes through a village of adobe houses, or a herd of cattle or a flock of sheep. Excepting the enormous adobe fortifications which

the Turkomans thought would enable them to resist the Russian invasion, the camels, and the fantastic costumes which the people wear, Central Asia looks exactly like Arizona; and the similarity is emphasized now and then when the train passes through an oasis with orchards like the orange groves around Riverside, and fields of grain and alfalfa, and vegetable gardens wherever water has been brought. Back along the far horizon we can see the source of this life and luxuriance — the snow-banks that fill the hollows in the mountains, which might irrigate much larger areas and increase the wealth of that country to a very great degree if capitalists would go there and invest their money in irrigation systems. There is room for many millions of people upon land within twenty miles on either side of the railway track, and the bright green spots on the landscape show what they might do.

Every day we saw hundreds of farmers plowing with camels and oxen, and sometimes they have a camel and a horse, or a camel and an ox, hitched together. We saw immense flocks of sheep and herds or droves of camels—whichever term is right—and baby camels that follow their mothers just like colts. They are awkward-looking objects though, with their long necks and long legs that look as slender as pipe stems, and they lift their noses and gaze stupidly at the train in an indifferent sort of way. At every railway station caravans are loading and unloading merchandise that has come from or is intended for the villages in the interior.

It didn't cost much to build this part of the Central Asia Railway, for there are few grades and few curves, few cuts and few fillings. The steppes of Central Asia are like the

THE WAY THE NATIVE FARMERS DO THEIR PLOWING.

prairies of Kansas, and the railway track often runs in an absolutely straight line for long distances — as far as you can see ahead — until the two rails come together at a point where the blue sky and the gray earth meet.

All that region is practically rainless, never more than five or six inches precipitation in a year, and often twelve months will pass without a drop of water from the sky. Most of the precipitation is in the winter, and from the 1st of December to the 1st of April the cold is intense. Sometimes there is a terrible tempest, a blizzard of wind and snow, which destroys entire herds of cattle and sheep and often many human lives. In summer the heat is intense. The atmosphere of the steppes, which is the Russian name for prairie, is heated seven times, like the furnace of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The same thermometer often registers 110 in the shade at the railway stations in August and 20 below in January. The railway company brings water from the Persian mountains, where are many cool, unfailing springs, but it is expensive business to lay a pipe for thirty miles.

Deserts are all alike, and Kara-Kum bears a close resemblance to certain sections of Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and the southern part of California; but it is not so bad as Death Valley, because its elevation is between seven and eight hundred feet above the level of the sea. The same mirage appears here, and often Russian soldiers have been deceived by delusive lakes of water and islands of trees when they were perishing of thirst during the campaigns which conquered Turkomania.

The popular impression of an oasis, formed from descrip-

tions in geographies we studied in our school days, is very different from the actual thing. The mind's eye recalls a cluster of palms, with a group of thatched huts under their grateful shade, bubbling fountains of water, tall, waving grass, orange, lemon, and banana trees laden with fruit, and a herd of camels munching the fragrant grass. The reality as we saw it in Asia is a wide stretch of wheat, oats, and alfalfa fields, divided by irrigating ditches; groves of locust trees laden with blossoms, which emit an odour as sweet as honey; a few fruit trees — apricots, peaches, and cherries — and perhaps a small vineyard. As I have said before, an oasis exists wherever water can be brought upon the soil, and the extent of the cultivated area depends entirely upon the abundance or capacity of the stream. The soil is rich in plant food. It produces luxuriant crops of grain and forage plants, and in the spring, when the water is first turned on, the steppe is carpeted with myriads of flowers.

It is one of those inexplicable mysteries of nature, a miracle it often seems, that the most barren and repulsive desert will suddenly blossom into life and beauty whenever it is awakened by rain.

There is a decided difference of opinion as to the character of the Turkomans, but I suppose there are good ones and bad ones, just as there are differences among all other of God's creatures, and no doubt the judgments pronounced upon them by various writers have been coloured by personal experience. General Alikhanoff, one of the Russian military commanders there for several years, was very severe in his denunciation. He declared that the Turkomans "never keep a promise or an oath if it suits their purpose to break it. In addition to this they are liars and gluttons.

They are frightfully envious, and finally there is not a people so unattractive in any moral respect."

The reputation the Turkomans claim for themselves may be illustrated by some of their own proverbs:

"The Turkoman needs neither the shade of a tree nor the protection of a roof."

"When the sword has been drawn, no Turkoman needs an excuse."

"The Turkoman in war knows neither father nor mother."

"Where there is a city there are no wolves; where there are Turkomans there is no peace."

The Persians, who are not a fighting race but are more given to the trades and industries, are frightfully alarmed whenever the Turkomans come near their border, and in olden times, before the Russian occupation, they suffered from frequent raids. A story is told of a Persian who was attacked by a Turkoman in the night. Being the stronger of the two, he threw his assailant to the ground and was about to cut his throat when the Turkoman called out:

"What are you going to do? Don't you see that I am a Turkoman?"

The Persian dropped his knife instantly and started to rise from the body of his victim. The Turkoman, as soon as his arms were free, seized the knife and plunged it into the Persian's heart.

In their fights with the Russians the Turkomans have shown marvellous bravery but no military skill, and it is acknowledged that on equal terms, among semi-savages of their own class, they are masters of the art of war, resembling the North American Indian more than the Eastern races to which they are related. And, while they have no

codes of morals or standards of honour to advertise, travellers who have passed much time among them and people who have employed their services testify to their loyalty, hospitality, and truth. Turkomans are very proud, and it is said that the poorest of them will never accept charity or a gift that he has not earned. Russians who employ them as servants explain that they must be treated with great consideration in order to get any work out of them. They will follow but will not be driven, and they will do anything upon request but nothing upon command. They are devoted to their women, although the latter are nothing but slaves, and treat them with great generosity. They are the only Mohammedan women who go without veils and mix freely with men. They wear masses of silver jewellery, bracelets, anklets, necklaces, and breastplates, and braid silver chains into their hair. Their head-dresses are usually loaded with coins, and the more silver a woman carries upon her person the greater her husband's reputation for wealth.

Although the Turkomans are a nomadic race, they have regular places for encampment which are near groups of adobe houses used for the storage of their surplus forage and food supplies. In each of these settlements is a mosque built entirely of mud; and a medresse, or school, at which the priests are educated. They are the only persons in the tribe who are able to read, and their literary accomplishments are usually limited to the reading of the Koran.

The government has organized a militia of Turkomans with Russian officers, and in this way has found employment and kept under discipline the most dangerous and turbulent characters among the several tribes. They are armed with rifles and cavalry sabres, and their uniform is the national

kahlat or dressing gown, a shako of sheepskin, a broad sash of brilliant colour around the waist, and Russian top boots. They are paid $12.50 a month, out of which they provide their own horses and rations, the government supplying them only with ammunition. Wherever they have been tried the Turkoman militia have proved worthy of confidence, and I understand it is the intention of the government to enlarge their functions and convert them into regular cavalry regiments.

CHAPTER IV

ASKABAD, CAPITAL OF TRANS-CASPIA

ALL Turkestan, like Gaul, is divided into three parts — the khanate of Bokhara, which retains its former limits; the province of Trans-Caspia, which lies between Bokhara and the Caspian Sea, and the province of Turkestan proper, which lies on the eastern boundary between Bokhara and China. Askabad is the capital of the province of Trans-Caspia, the residence of the governor-general and commander-in-chief of the military forces, and headquarters of the several branches of the civil and military administrations. The Russians have avoided the difficulty which has perplexed England in India by concentrating both civil and military authority in a single head, which is supported by a cabinet or ministry and a large staff of civil and military officers, each having his own bureau and jurisdiction. The organization is similar to that in Poland, the Caucasus, and other outlying provinces of the Russian Empire. Civilians are employed in the financial, auditing, post-office, judicial, and other departments where the duties are purely civil. The railway, the engineering works, and similar technical branches of the government are under military control.

The people of the towns and villages take care of themselves and have as much home rule as is practicable, the local governments being continued upon the ancient native

plan. Trans-Caspia is divided into several districts, and each district into volosts. Each volost elects an elder, called an aksakal (literally, a graybeard), who acts in an executive and a judicial capacity, and is assisted in the administration of his office by representatives of the people, chosen usually for their dignity and wisdom. The aksakal is a little czar in his own jurisdiction, and the government officials do not interfere with him so long as he does nothing to weaken their authority. The iron hand is hidden in a velvet glove.

The viceroy supervises the governors and through his ministers looks after the finances, the army, the railway, and other public works, the postal and telegraph service, and exercises both legislative and executive functions. There are two kinds of courts, Russian and native, but when the litigants happen to be of different races, the former have jurisdiction. All the decisions may be appealed to the viceroy, who investigates and acts through his legal advisers upon the recommendation of the council of state, but he seldom interferes unless some political question is involved. Native customs, hereditary claims, property rights, and religious observances of the natives are recognized in the most scrupulous manner.

While Russian immigrants may appropriate unoccupied land by regular procedure under the department of public works, they are not permitted to purchase property from the natives or compete with them in the native town in any line of business or occupation. Russian soldiers who desire to settle in Turkestan, upon their discharge, receive allotments of land. All residents with fixed homes pay a regular tax upon their property, as in other countries.

The nomads pay a tax of four rubles, which is equivalent to two dollars in our money, for every kibitka, or tent. The government collects 10 per cent on the assessed value of the gross products of irrigated land, and 6 per cent upon the gross profits of unirrigated land, which consists of wools, skins, and hides, and other pastoral products.

The most important feature of the government is the management of the irrigation systems, because the life of the country depends upon the economical use of the water. Irrigation is looked after by an official called the "miraby," and under him are special agents, who turn on and off the water in the private ditches as it is needed. It is their duty to investigate and settle disputes between the farmers over the use of water, for nearly all the trouble between neighbours arises from a suspicion that one man is getting more than his share.

The police, called gendarmes, are a separate organization from the army, and are under the control of their own officers, who report to the governor-general and commander-in-chief. There are officers on every railway train, usually a captain or a lieutenant or both, who exercise almost arbitrary authority, so far as the passengers are concerned, and can put them off the train and send them to prison from any station, according to their judgment. These train officers have regular beats, covering distances from 250 to 300 miles, and a compartment is always reserved for them in the first-class coach.

Askabad is a splotch of green upon the desert — a city of about 15,000 inhabitants, in addition to a garrison of 10,000 soldiers living in enormous white barracks, one-story adobe buildings, and long rows of tents enclosed by

STREET IN THE RUSSIAN CITY OF ASKABAD.

mud walls that have been whitewashed. The town covers a very large area, like all Russian settlements in Turkestan. The streets are very wide, and everyone who settles there is allowed all the ground he wants, for there is plenty of room. Trans-Caspia is a big country and most of its surface is unoccupied. The streets are paved and well shaded with trees. The railway station is hidden in a grove of locusts and mulberries, and for a wide area around the city are luxuriant gardens enclosed within mud walls.

In the centre of the town is an obelisk, erected in memory of the artillerymen who were killed at the massacre of Geok-Tepe, and around the pedestal are planted several guns that were captured from the Afghans several years ago. The green domes of two big Russian churches arise above the greener boughs of the trees, and the gilt crosses upon their crests signify much to the people. The German element, from the Baltic provinces of Russia, have a Lutheran church of neat design near the railway station, but there is no sign of a mosque or a synagogue, although the activity of the business quarter has attracted a large number of Persians and Jews.

There is a neat museum filled with military mementoes and specimens of natural history; a high school for boys and one for girls; and a military school, in which young Turkomans, the sons of the chiefs and other men of importance, are educated for military careers. There are several newspapers printed in the Russian language, a theatre subsidized by the municipality for the diversion of army officers who are exiled there, a military club, numerous shops with attractive show windows, and various other features of a flourishing Russian city.

This leads me to remark that the government of the United States might find it profitable to imitate the Russian policy by furnishing more diversions for the officers and soldiers it sends to the Philippines. The Russians act on the theory that contentment is necessary for the proper performance of military and civil duty, and to make their soldiers contented a good deal of money is expended for amusements. There is always a race course, gymnasium, a theatre, and a club for social purposes, and the government usually provides the land and the buildings. In every room in every barracks is a portrait of the Czar, and every soldier takes off his hat in its presence. A list of military honours, especially those conferred upon enlisted men, is constantly posted.

Askabad is an ancient settlement, although it never had any particular importance, and it is in the centre of a very fertile district and a prosperous population. An idea of the financial condition of the Turkomans may be gleaned from the official statistics relating to the Akhal district, an oasis about two hundred miles long and one hundred and fifty miles wide, which is well watered from a never-failing source of supply in the mountains of Persia. In this district, according to the latest returns, there are about 113,000 inhabitants housed in villages and in 27,812 kibitkas, the circular tents or tepees used by the nomadic portion of the population. There are in this district 111,000 camels, 27,500 horses, 1,530,000 sheep, and 160,000 other cattle. The tendency of the population is to settle down into fixed places of abode and increase the area of cultivated land so far as the supply of water will permit. The government gives every encouragement to agriculture.

Askabad was selected as the capital of Trans-Caspia because of its highly strategical situation regarding both Khiva to the north and Persia to the south. Fine macadamized roads, twenty-four feet wide and of easy grades, so that artillery and army wagons can be hauled over them rapidly, have been constructed in both directions. That which runs southward to Persia reaches the two great pillars which mark the boundary line near a village called Bazdirha, thirty miles from Askabad, and within the last few years the road has been extended eighty miles farther to the sacred city of Meshed, Persia, which is the burial place of a much-venerated saint of the Shiite sect of Islam. A regular line of diligences runs in connection with the railway trains from Askabad to Meshed, making the journey in five days, and they are patronized by thousands of pilgrims who come from western Persia and from the cities on the Caspian every year. Nearly all the third-class passengers on our train were Shiite pilgrims, dark-skinned men with intensely black beards and serious faces, wearing the black fez and the long-tailed coat of black or gray broadcloth, with full skirts gathered at the waist, which are affected by the Persians. Most of them were men of dignity and apparently of education. Some of them were accompanied by their wives, and more of them by their children. The boys were dressed exactly like their fathers, which made them look like Tom Thumbs — dwarfs dressed in clothes usually worn by people of full stature. The government encourages these pilgrimages because they increase the traffic of the road and promote a friendly acquaintance between their own people and their Persian neighbours.

A railway has been surveyed from Askabad to the

Persian boundary, and rails and ties are piled up in the train yards ready to be laid at any time they may be needed, but the protest of Great Britain has thus far prevented that enterprise from being carried out. The English think that the Russians take altogether too much interest in Persia, but a year or two ago they were consoled by a treaty in which the Russians agreed not to annex any more Persian territory, nor make any further demonstrations in this locality. At the same time Russia agreed not to interfere with the British sphere of influence in southern Persia and along the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless the Russians are ready for any "eventuality" that may occur, and should it ever become necessary to move artillery and other troops they will have the use of two wide, level, and perfect highways which they have constructed, ostensibly for commercial purposes, from Resht to Tabriz and Teheran, and from Askabad to Meshed, the most important points in northern Persia.

The road from Resht to Teheran has changed traffic conditions on the Caspian Sea greatly to the benefit of Russian steamship companies, which have a monopoly of freighting on those waters. The road to Meshed, besides being a great accommodation to pilgrims, is also an important feeder to the Central Asia Railway. Over it is brought by camel caravans an immense amount of freight from the interior of Persia, and a glance at the warehouses and freight cars at Askabad will give you an idea of the tons of merchandise that are sent into Persia from this point.

The province of Trans-Caspia is entirely dependent upon Persia for water, and a treaty between the Czar and the Shah in 1881, which fixes the boundary, article 4, solemnly guar-

antees that His Majesty the Shah will not on any account whatever permit the establishment of new settlements among the course of the streams and rivulets that water the soil of that province from their sources to the point where they leave Persian territory. He pledges himself not to extend the area of land in that part of Persia now under cultivation, and under no pretence whatever will he turn off the water in larger quantities than is necessary for irrigating the fields now under cultivation within Persian territory.

There are unmistakable evidences, however, of a meteorological revolution in this part of the world. Those who have followed the trail of Alexander the Great declare that to-day it would be utterly impossible to conduct such an army as he led through regions where small caravans of twenty and thirty camels can scarcely find sufficient water and forage.

When Alexander returned from the subjugation of India he divided his army into two columns, one of which was attended by the elephants, the invalids, the heavy baggage, and was led by Krateros, a Macedonian, one of his ablest generals, through Afghanistan, Seyistan, and Persia. Evidently they met with no special difficulties and suffered no hardships. Otherwise such things would have been mentioned. There must have been, therefore, an ample supply of water along the trail, while to-day it covers for almost the entire distance a lifeless desert, either entirely waterless or supplied only with a few brackish wells. Twenty-five hundred years ago this route was so important that it was defended by strong fortifications, supplied with frequent and enormous caravansaries, and the ruins of populous cities occur at frequent intervals. Either perennial springs

which have since dried up or a regular rainfall furnished a water supply for a dense population, but to-day all the moisture in the country comes from the melting snow on the Persian mountains.

Twenty-eight miles west of Askabad, when the train stops at a station called Geok-Tepe, about 10 o'clock in the morning, all the passengers make a rush to a little memorial museum 300 or 400 feet from the track on the opposite side from the depot. It is an artistic little building of brick covered with stucco painted white, and is filled with relics of a horrible massacre that occurred there in 1881, when the Turkomans made their last stand against the Russians and 20,000 human beings were slaughtered in the most merciless and inexcusable manner. Relics picked up on the battlefield, that were actually used in the fight, are artistically arranged upon the walls, and several small cannon that were engaged in the bombardment are parked on the outside before the entrance. Walls are portraits of the men that were conspicuous on both sides. Makdum Kuli Khan, who commanded the Turkomans; Tekme Sidar, the second in command; Nazar, Ogeri, and other chieftains who led the natives, have their photographs exhibited in a large frame, and it seems as if everybody who had anything to do with the battle is represented by an oil painting or a photograph except the famous General Skobeleff, for years the idol of the Russian army, who was in command of the attacking party and was responsible for the massacre. Modern history has recorded few such horrible atrocities, but perhaps, after all, General Skobeleff was right when he said: "My system is to strike hard and keep on striking until resistance is completely subdued;

then cease slaughter and be kind and humane to the prostrate enemy."

The terrifying effect of such a massacre upon a semi-savage people is perpetuated for generations, and the ruined walls of the fortress, several monuments to the heroism of the various regiments and brigades, and this memorial museum are maintained by the government as a perpetual reminder to the sons and the grandsons of those who were slain by the strength and the merciless energy of Russia. A new generation occupies the land, although many Turkomans who had a prominent part in the battle are still living and holding honourable positions in the Russian service. As soon as the natives submitted, honours, offices, and pensions were bestowed upon them, and, as one might say, the governor-general of Russia has ever since been leading by the hand the orphans of those who fell in the fight.

"I hold it as a principle that in Asia the duration of peace is in direct proportion to the slaughter you inflict upon the natives," said Skobeleff in defence of his tactics. "The harder you hit them the longer they will be quiet afterward."

And Skobeleff makes a rather striking comparison with the British policy of moral suasion with India, which has not been so effective as the brutal blows that the Russians have inflicted upon the people they have conquered. There can be no doubt that the Russian tactics are exceedingly effective from a practical point of view, because the Oriental mind recognizes in every terrible disaster the all-powerful will of Allah, and the Oriental being a fatalist, that means submission.

The emir of Bokhara, when he saw what was happening around him, shrewdly placed himself under the protection

of the Czar and has been allowed to maintain a nominal and somewhat ostentatious independence ever since. The remaining rulers made the hardest fight they could. They resisted the invaders to the limit of their strength and the conquest cost Russia an enormous number of lives as well as rubles. Every now and then you can see from the car window a ruined town or a crumbling fortress, all built of mud and incapable of sustaining an attack from modern artillery. Those ruins mark the spots where the natives endeavoured to repel the invasion, and it is said that for two or three years it was impossible for a horseman to ride over the steppes without the hoofs of his animal striking a human skull.

In the fall of 1880 the Tekkes, one of the strongest of the Turkoman tribes, driven from one point to another, decided to make a final stand at Geok-Tepe, where they expected to annihilate the Russian invaders of their country. If they had scattered to the mountains, which were only thirty or forty miles away, they might have carried on a guerilla warfare and harassed the Russians indefinitely, but their confidence in their own prowess and in the strength of an enormous mud fortress which they had erected, was so great that they thought it best to concentrate their forces.

Therefore more than 35,000 persons, including 10,000 mounted warriors, with as many horses and 8,000 camels, assembled within the walls of one of the largest fortresses that was ever built. Its walls of mud surrounded a quadrilateral enclosure measuring 980 yards on the north, 1,680 yards on the east, 1,575 yards on the west, and 560 yards on the south side, making a total circuit of 2.6 miles. These walls were fifteen feet high, thirty-five feet thick at the base

and twenty-one feet thick at the top, made of mud thrown up and trodden hard by men and horses. There were twenty-one gates, masked by large semicircular traverses outside and protected by rifle towers. Outside the wall was a ditch the entire distance, varying from six to nine feet deep and from twelve to sixteen feet wide.

A branch of the Sakiz-Yeb River was conducted into the fort through an opening under the wall, and after supplying seven or eight large reservoirs dug in the ground, passed out again. At various points along the inside of the walls were warehouses for the storage of supplies and ammunition, which had been gathered from all parts of Turkestan and were supposed to be sufficient to maintain the garrison for a year. In a broad open space in the centre of the enclosure were 13,000 kibitkas — circular huts resembling the tepees of the North American Indians—in which the nomadic Turkomans live. With extraordinary confidence in their ability to resist the advance of the invaders, the 10,000 warriors of the Tekke clan brought their wives and children within these walls prepared to remain indefinitely.

The country around Geok-Tepe is rich and highly cultivated. The oasis extends about one hundred miles east and west and between thirty and forty miles north and south, and nearly all of those who came into the fortress were men of substance — the cream of the Tekke population, a tribe which numbers several hundred thousand souls. Their confidence was strengthened by the presence of their khan or king, Makdum Kuli, and their greatest general, Tekme Sidar.

During the fall of 1880 General Skobeleff "felt" the Turkoman position, as military writers say, and then retired to the Caspian, where he completed his plans and preparations.

In January he returned with 7,000 men and sixty guns and pitched his camp about a mile from the fortress. For three weeks there was casual fighting. The natives, impatient of the delay and irritated by the peril that surrounded them, made four desperate sallies upon the Russian camp under cover of darkness, and kept up a continual fusillade upon the earthworks that had been thrown up around them. The Russians easily repelled their attacks and occasionally answered their fire, but made no offensive demonstration, and continued to push their lines forward until they were so close that conversation could be heard on either side. When the Russians began to undermine the walls of the fortress their advance redoubt was only seventy yards distant, and the Tekkes frequently crawled over the sand at night and stole the rifles in the Russian trenches.

On the 20th of January the attacking force was divided into three columns, one of them under command of Colonel Kuropatkin, since famous as commander-in-chief of the Russian army in China, and at daylight a combined attack was made. The mines were sprung, and tore great gaps in the mud walls, through which the Russian troops entered with bands playing the Russian national anthem, drums beating, and colours flying. They were promptly engaged in a terrific hand-to-hand fight with bayonets and swords. The Tekkes fought with amazing courage, but their pride had been stunned and their confidence destroyed by the ease with which the Russians had battered down their defences, and within two or three hours after the attack began thousands of fugitives streamed out of the gates upon the plains, with troops of Cossacks and other Russian cavalry pursuing them and cutting them down.

Skobeleff ordered both horse and foot to pursue the retreating enemy and to give no quarter. This command was obeyed with vigour for eleven miles, and in the morning 8,000 bodies of both sexes and of all ages were lying upon the plain. In the fort were found the bodies of 6,500 dead warriors and several thousand living women and children. The troops were allowed to loot without interruption, and booty valued at $3,000,000 is said to have been found within the fortress. The Russian loss was only sixty killed and 340 wounded. Skobeleff in his official report boasted that he had destroyed 20,000 of the enemy, which is considered an accurate estimate. You can understand why the Turkomans called him Guenz Kanli, which means "bloody eyes," and that the survivors of that day even now shudder when they hear a band play the Russian national anthem.

Skobeleff's "victory" made him the most conspicuous man in Russia, but the consequences were fatal. He went to St. Petersburg and to Paris, and to other places more perilous to one of his convivial disposition than the deserts of Turkestan, and engaged in a campaign with the evil one, in which he was utterly routed. He was one of those rare soldiers who combined magnetic influence with magnificent courage and strategic ability. He was a general at 30 years of age; he died at 38. There is no telling what he might have become if he had lived and behaved himself. No soldier in Russia for generations was more beloved or admired, and none surpassed him in ability.

Skobeleff's blow at Geok-Tepe was fatal to Turkoman independence, and the Russians have had no trouble in western Turkestan since. As soon as the excitement quieted down, Makdum Kuli Khan, Tekme Sidar, and other

Turkoman leaders were invited to a conference and cordial relations were restored. Decorations were bestowed upon them in a most lavish manner. They were appointed to military positions, given gorgeous uniforms, and invited to Moscow in 1883 to attend the coronation of the Czar, where they were shown distinguished attention and flattered into the belief that their services were essential to the peace and prosperity of the Russian Empire. Their sons are now captains, majors, and even colonels in the Russian army, and the Czar has no subjects more loyal than they.

The greater part of the walls of the fortress remain, either to their full height or several feet from the ground. Every visitor is astonished at the enormous area of the enclosure and the folly of the Turkomans in placing themselves in such a trap, where they were at the mercy of Russian sabres and artillery. There are a dozen or more monuments in different parts of the enclosure, erected by the several regiments and brigades engaged in the attack; as memorials to their fallen comrades. Opposite the entrance to the little museum is a shaft of granite erected by the Russian government as a tribute to its faithful soldiers.

CHAPTER V

MERV, QUEEN OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

THE city of Merv, once "the queen of the world," is now a small, commonplace Russian town, with a bad reputation for malaria. Like all of the new Russian towns in Central Asia, it was laid out in generous proportions, with wide streets shaded by rows of thriving poplars and lined with one-story brick buildings with whitewashed walls. There are a number of shops containing the necessaries of life, and some of the luxuries can be purchased. The residences extend back from the street a considerable distance and usually surround a courtyard or patio in Spanish style. As there is plenty of room upon the steppe, there has been no crowding. Everybody was allowed to enclose as much room as he wanted for garden and groves, but those attractions are hidden by high walls. The offices of the Russian administration are plain but commodious buildings; there is a large church of Byzantine architecture with the conventional five domes almost always found in orthodox Greek architecture; and a schoolhouse near by, where, I am told, excellent teachers are employed. There is an officers' club, with a mess for bachelors, which affords a social centre for the Russian population, and enormous barracks, as usual, accommodating a garrison of several thousand men.

One is inclined to speculate whether so many soldiers

actually are needed in Turkestan. There is no danger of revolutions or insurrections among the natives, and certainly Persia, which is the only neighbour in that part of Turkestan, has sufficient troubles of her own to look after without interfering with Russian affairs.

There is a pretty public square, well watered and well shaded, and in the morning you can see groups of neat, intelligent Russian girls with blond hair and blue eyes, wearing long white aprons to protect their frocks and white handkerchiefs over their heads, on their way to school. Their "shining morning faces" are plain but attractive. Any fair-haired, pink-faced young woman looks pretty in those surroundings. A great deal more attention is given to the education of women in that part of Russia than in Europe, particularly as there is a great demand for teachers in the public schools.

The Merv oasis is in some respects the greatest in Asia, and has the largest area of cultivated soil, all of which is owing to the Murghab River, or the "Moorghub," as Matthew Arnold calls it in his poem:

> "I have seen Afrasiab cities; Samarkand,
> Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste;
> And the black Toorkmen tents, and have drank
> The desert rivers Moorghub and Tejend,
> Kohik, and where the Kalmucks feed their sheep,
> The northern Syr and the great Oxus stream —
> The yellow Oxus."

And genial Tom Moore sang the praises of this same river:

> "And fairest of all streams, the Murga roves
> Among Merou's bright palaces and groves."

The Moorghub, the Murga, and the Murghab of the present day are the same river, and Merou is the Persian

for Merv. But neither Matthew Arnold nor Thomas Moore ever saw the place. If they had, they would not have written those lines. Merv and the Murghab may be full of romance, but they are not beautiful to look upon, and a painful disenchantment is in store for sentimental persons who go there, or who visit any part of Central Asia with the expectation of seeing things as they are described in "Lalla Rookh."

"The fairest of all streams" is a muddy, turgid river, the colour of poor coffee, flowing in a channel of brown clay, between high banks which cave in every year during high water and always are likely to crumble. In the spring months, when the snow is melting in the mountains, the Murghab is a terrible torrent, tearing its way through the desert with irresistible force. In the fall of the year, exhausted by those exertions, emaciated by evaporation and the demands of the irrigation canals, it is a sullen, stagnant, unwholesome stream. The annual overflow usually covers the low places in the valley with water, which remains in stagnant ponds after the flood recedes, and slowly evaporates, leaving slimy acres of decaying vegetation to poison the air.

The Tejend, of which Mr. Arnold writes, is similar in appearance and habits, but, like plain people, unlovely rivers have their uses, and both the Murghab and the Tejend are the most precious gifts that nature could have bestowed upon a desert. They are inexhaustible. They have met all demands that have ever been made upon them, and cause the desert to smile about two hundred miles in one direction and 145 miles in another. Besides this local irrigation, they spread their blessings by railway for many

more miles. Long trains of cars bearing huge water tanks occupy every side track, and when they are filled locomotives haul them to the thirsty communities in both directions, the most important and profitable freight that the Central Asia Railway handles, because without it the desert would win.

The Kohik River, referred to by the gentle poet, is the modern Zerafshan, which waters the oases of Samarkand and Bokhara, and without it neither of those cities could survive a fortnight. The "great Oxus stream — the yellow Oxus," is one of the largest and most important bodies of water in the universe and the longest river in Asia. It is called the Amu Daria and is altogether worthy of the rhapsody in which Lord Curzon indulges in his well-known book on Central Asia. He says:

"The Gihon of Eden, 'that encompasseth the whole land of Ethiopia,' the Vak-Shu of Sanscrit literature, the Oxus of the Greeks, the Amu Daria or River Sea of the Tartars — no river, not even the Nile, can claim a nobler tradition or a more illustrious history. Descending from the hidden Roof of the World, its waters tell of forgotten peoples and whisper secrets of unknown lands. They are believed to have rocked the cradle of our race. Long the legendary watermark between Iran and Turan, they have worn a channel deep into the fate of humanity. World-wide conquerors, an Alexander and a Tamerlane, slaked their horses' thirst in the Oxus stream: eastern poets drank inspiration from its fountains; Arab geographers boasted of it as 'superior in volume, in depth, and in breadth to all the rivers of the earth.'

"The bed of the Amu Daria — i.e., the depression which

is covered in time of high water — is here between two and three miles wide, though in summer, when more swollen by the melted snows of the Hindu Kush and the Pamir, the inundated surface sometimes extends five miles. In the autumn and winter, when the waters have shrunk, the channel is confined within its two banks and is then from half a mile to a mile in width, flowing with a rapid current of most irregular depth over a shifting and sandy bottom. Mud banks, covered with ooze or sand, show where the current has only recently subsided. Still, however, did it merit the title, 'the great Oxus stream — the yellow Oxus.' The colour of the water is a very dirty coffee-hued brown, the facsimile of that of the Nile, but it is extremely healthful and can be drunk with impunity. I was strongly reminded by the appearance of this great river, by the formation of its bed, by the structure of its banks, and by the scenery and life which they displayed, of many a landscape on the Nile in upper Egypt. There is the same fringe of intensely fertile soil along its shores, with the same crouching clay-built villages, and even a Bokharan counterpart to the Sakkiyeh and Shadoof for raising and distributing the life-giving waters of the stream. Only, on the Oxus there is no cliff like the eastern wall of the Nile at Gebel-el-Tayr, and alas, in this northern latitude there is no belt of coroneted palms."

The ruins of a big mud fortress called Koushid Khan Kala, which the Turkomans were building to hold back the Russian invasion when the massacre of Geok-Tepe ended all resistance, stands alongside the railway track as a mute but convincing witness of the superiority of a live civilization over a dead one. As an object lesson to the

natives, it has been of great effect, because they believed their fortress to be impregnable. And, to make it still more forceful, the railway engineers cut off a corner of the walls to make room for a side track. Near-by is an American cotton gin. The fortress was erected in 1880-1881 by the forced labour of 8,000 Tekkes, members of a tribe of Turkomans, and the mud walls, which are between thirty and forty feet high, sixty feet thick at the base, and twenty feet thick at the top, enclose a space nearly one mile square. In striking contrast to the impotent mud walls are a few neatly compact batteries of Russian artillery, half concealed by trees.

The Russian government has planted more than 3,000,000 trees in the Merv oasis, mostly poplars, mulberries, and locusts. The mulberries feed the silkworms, the poplars make the best roof poles for the thatched cabins of the natives, and the locusts perfume the atmosphere with a honeyed odour.

The Merv oasis has the most fertile soil and the densest population of the several cultivated areas in Turkestan. The "Moorghub," as Matthew Arnold calls it, gives life to about 16,000 square miles of farms, tilled by about 135,000 farmers, who are raising vast quantities of cotton, wheat, rye, barley, sorghum, rice, melons, vegetables of all kinds, grapes, berries, peaches, apricots, and other orchard fruits. Millions of cattle and sheep drink from the tawny stream; hundreds of thousands of camels are bred on the prairies; the Merv horses are the best in Central Asia, and when the Russians first occupied the land they seriously discussed the policy of making the Mervi surrender their mounts, as they had surrendered their guns. No native

is allowed to have a rifle or a revolver unless he belongs to the militia, but all are permitted to wear their ancient daggers, which are as much a part of their native costume as their boots or their shirts.

There is a railway south from Merv to Kushk and a branch to Maruchak, both unimportant towns upon the borders of Afghanistan, but the trains carry no freight except military supplies and no passengers except soldiers. No civilian is allowed to pass over that road. It is as much as a man's life and liberty are worth to ask permission to do so, because the Russian secret service would at once have a conniption fit for fear the applicant was an English spy. There are supposed to be strong fortifications, with heavy armament, on the border, but no one is allowed to see them. Everybody knows, however, that large garrisons are kept continually under arms and ready for action, and the warehouses at Merv are filled with military supplies. The Russian viceroy can throw 10,000 troops into Afghanistan in forty-eight hours if it should ever become necessary, and, notwithstanding the recent treaty of amity and alliance with Great Britain, this menace of Herat and Kandahar, the two principal cities of Afghanistan, is maintained. The Russians also have a pretender to the Afghan throne living at their expense in Tashkend, Samarkand, and Bokhara in turn, who might be made useful in an emergency by putting in a claim to the authority and emoluments of the present emir.

The Russians found Merv an insignificant Turkoman encampment of kibitkas, surrounding a village of mud huts, and have made it a military post of great strategic importance, commanding the western approaches of Afghanistan. This means a great deal to England, with India on the

other side of that semi-civilized buffer state, but of greater interest to us are the successful efforts of the Russians to introduce American cotton into Asia so as to supply their own mills with raw material and thus escape their present dependence upon the planters of the United States.

The soil and climate of the Merv oasis are especially adapted to raising cotton, and immediately after Russian occupation in the early '80's tons of seed were imported from the United States and distributed among the native farmers. The ancient irrigation system was overhauled and rebuilt by government engineers and extended as far as the resources of the Murghab River would permit. Two hundred thousand acres of the land thus added to the cultivated area were made over to Alexander II, a monarch of noble character and benevolent disposition, who established there a model plantation and colonized it with about three hundred emancipated serfs. The headquarters of the plantation, which are on an excessive scale, are located at the railway station called Bairam Ali, about ten miles east of Merv and immediately south of the ruins of the ancient city of that name.

The Czar's plantation has never paid a profit. Indeed, it costs an average of $50,000 a year to meet the deficits. But if the privy purse were not behind the enterprise the management would doubtless be more economical and the expenses would be diminished, even if the earnings were not increased. There are about three hundred workmen — Russians, Kirghiz, Tekkes, Afghans, and other natives — under the direction of a Russian superintendent and several assistants who are provided with comfortable residences and are furnished with most of their supplies. Several American

experts have been employed at one time or another to instruct the colonists in the art of cultivating cotton and in the use of modern implements and machinery. There is a Greek orthodox church where the employes may worship; a hospital and free dispensary, with a surgeon and free nurses, where they may go if they are sick or injured. The repair-shops are big enough for a dozen such plantations; there is a ginhouse, a compress and a cotton-seed-oil mill with American machinery; a bakery where the employes can buy bread, a bazaar where they can obtain other supplies, and a fruit-canning establishment equipped with the latest apparatus, where tomatoes and other vegetables are canned, and strawberry and apricot jams and preserves are made for the market. Everything is run by electricity generated with petroleum fuel.

The cotton crop will average about 500 pounds to the acre, with 150,000 acres under cultivation. Part of it is leased on a cash rental, part is worked by shares, and the remainder is cultivated by the superintendent of the estate as a model for the education of the farmers of Turkestan and for experimental purposes. It is altogether an expensive, fancy plant with several purely ornamental features, and a great deal of the earnings are wasted in the purchase of new machinery that is not needed and in experiments that are not always wise.

There is a decided difference of opinion as to the effect of the Czar's example. Some critics insist that it is pernicious and that it has done a great deal of harm by misleading the native farmers into the adoption of extravagant methods. The usefulness of such an establishment is always governed by the economies it can teach, and, as one well-

informed gentleman remarked, economy is the only thing that is not taught on the Czar's farm.

Turkestan ranks second to the United States as a cotton producer, and the annual crop is now greater than that of Egypt or India. Cotton has always grown there. It is indigenous to the soil, and so far back as tradition reaches the people have produced the material out of which their cotton gowns were made. Knowing this, General Kaufmann, the conqueror of Turkestan and the first governor-general, following the broad-minded policy that characterized his administration from the start, introduced American seed and methods of cultivation and interested the mill men of Moscow and other manufacturing cities of Russia for the encouragement of the native planters. To him Russia owes the success of the most important economic problem ever undertaken in this part of the world. Russian manufacturers have invested considerable capital in plantations and irrigation works, and the industry has been extended until it is now the most extensive and the most profitable in Turkestan. The limits of the irrigated area extend as far north as Tashkend and as far east as Andijan, the terminus of the Central Asia Railway, upon the borders of China. Millions of acres more might be reclaimed, and a considerable acreage is being added to the productive area every year, but the cost of irrigation plants requires a large capital. It is a matter for syndicates, not for individuals.

The cotton-seed-oil industry is also very important. The natives will consume all of the oil that can be produced, and the cake proves to be the best camel food known. It is so conveniently carried; it contains a higher degree of

nourishment for its bulk and weight than any forage; heat and dampness do not spoil it, and it can be handled with the minimum of trouble. There are American compresses, ginneries, and oil mills in connection with all the large plantations, and they look exactly like those that you can see around Memphis and Atlanta.

Ancient Merv has been the scene of much history and more romance. Two thousand years ago Merv was "the Queen of the World." Its glories have been described by the poets; its sieges have been the themes of military experts for centuries; its scholars have contributed much to human learning, and its wealth has been coveted by conquerors of all ages. Few cities have a larger place in the history of mankind or have been the stage of events of greater moment.

Merv was founded about 400 or 500 B.C. It was the Antiochia of the ancient Greeks, and by that name is known in ancient history. Darius the Persian, Alexander the Great, the Cæsars of Rome, Khan Genghis the Mongol, Tamerlane the Tartar, and all the great warriors of Asia have fought over it and have looted its treasures. It has been twice the residence of a Christian bishop, in the fifth and again in the fourteenth century. The Persians, Greeks, Romans, Mongols, Tartars, and finally the Russians have made it their capital in turn, and twenty square miles — some writers say forty — of ruins indicate what the city has been and what it is to-day.

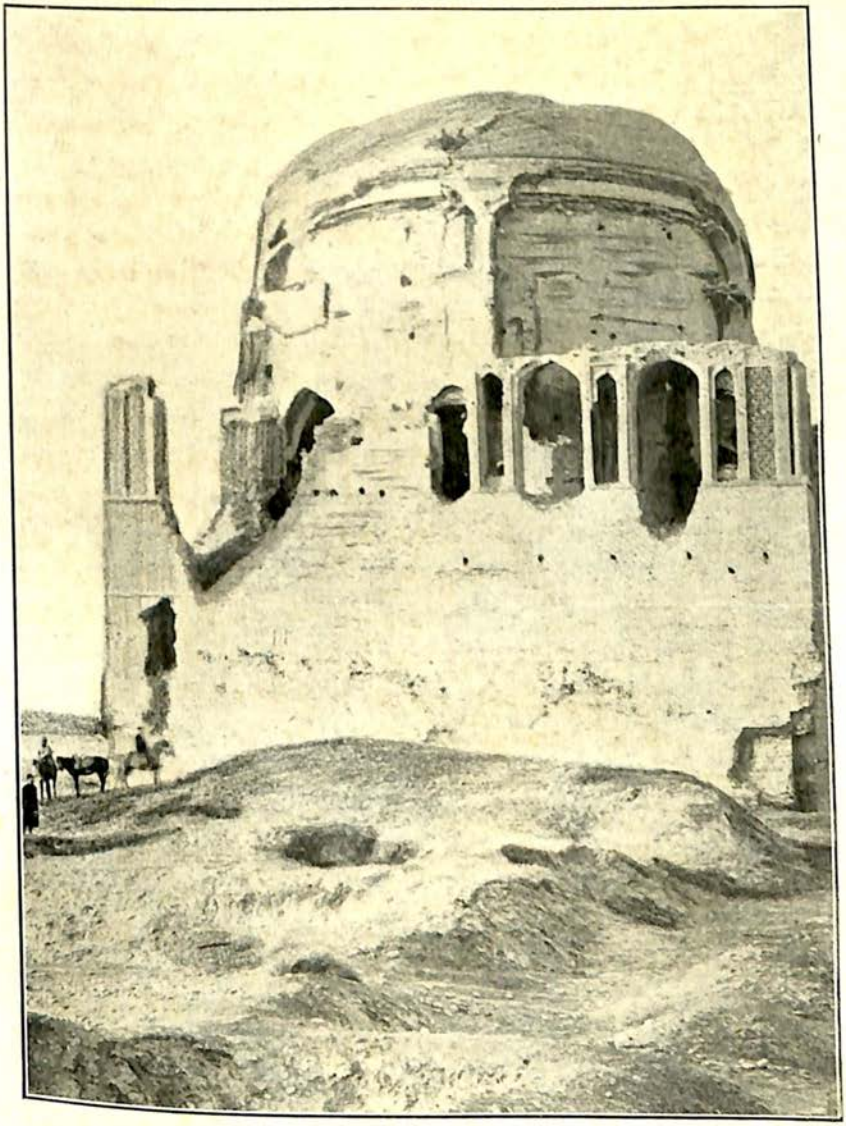
Although Mesopotamia is believed to have been the scene of the origin of mankind, China was a source of a large portion of the world's population. In early times the congestion in China forced out tides of emigration and

conquest. Advancing westward through the vast region now known as Turkestan, they drove their flocks and herds beyond the boundary between the continents, over-running Austria and Germany, and even France, where they were known successively as Goths, Vandals, Huns, Tartars, and Turks.

The habitat of the original Turks, called in Chinese Tu-kaiu, was in the Altai Mountains of China, whence they migrated in large numbers at an early day, and gave the name of Turkestan to the territory they occupied. From there they moved westward, because in that direction they met with least resistance, and therefore wandered in the greatest number. With intervals of two hundred years several great Turkish waves poured over western Asia and southern Europe.

The first flood took the form of religious invasion of Christian countries, and under Alp Arslan they invaded the Roman Empire. His career was cut short in 1063 by a mortal wound received at the hands of a man whom he had condemned to death. Merv was his capital, and there to-day stand the ruins of his tomb. His reign was attended by a degree of material prosperity, an advance in learning, culture, and in the development of literature and architecture that have never been surpassed in the history of Turkestan.

He was followed by a grandson, Sanjar, also a man of intelligence and learning, whose reign was one of the most brilliant of that century. His capital, however, was destroyed by invaders during his absence on a military campaign, and when he returned he was so shocked at the desolation that met his eyes that he sickened and died. The ruins of his splendid mausoleum, which was built



THE ABODE OF ETERNITY. TOMB OF THE SULTAN SANJAR AMONG THE RUINS OF ANCIENT MERV, ERECTED SOMEWHERE ABOUT THE YEAR 1100, A. D.

during his lifetime, are still in the centre of ancient Merv, and so massive were the walls that the natives called it Dar-ul-Akhirat, "the Abode of Eternity." Sixty years after his death it was destroyed by Ghengis Khan and his horde of Mongols, who swept over the country like meteors. He was a Chinese and one of the most remarkable of men. He conquered the continent from the Yellow Sea to the Black Sea, and the great Tamerlane was one of his descendants. Tamerlane was half Chinese, half Turk, and all Tartar.

There were three cities of the same name in successive periods upon adjoining sites. At one time "the Queen of the World" had a population of a million or more — perhaps several times in its history. Its commercial importance was greater than that of any city between China and Greece. It was the central point on the caravan route between the east and the west and the north and the south. Its khans and caravansaries were the largest in Asia, and were filled with the goods of China and India, which met the merchandise of Europe there.

The visitor at Hairam Ali will find no accommodations, although he can get a wholesome meal at the railway station and a carriage that will take him as far as he cares to go through a wilderness of roofless walls, heaps of crumbling brick and stone, and ghostly remnants of palaces, castles, towers, ramparts, and other military works, and the domes of mosques, meddresses, and tombs. Most of the buildings are shapeless masses of débris and crumbling walls. A few preserve their outlines sufficiently to give an idea of their ancient dimensions and grandeur, but I do not believe such a wreck of human habitations exists anywhere else in

the world. There is no map or diagram by which they can be traced or identified. There is no one to guide a stranger about or point out the objects of interest. All is confusion and the visitor will be bewildered at what seems to be a limitless labyrinth of ruins.

Archæologists have been there again and again, but the task of investigation is so prodigious that it frightens them away. They usually study the situation for a few days, sometimes for a week, but they never come again, although it is difficult to imagine any field of research that offers so much in return for labour.

The climate is severe in the summer because of the heat and in the winter because of the cold, but the spring and autumn months are congenial and cloudless, and railway trains go by in both directions every few hours, with an express each way daily. Camping equipment can be bought without much expense, and provisions can be obtained at the neighbouring cities as easily as in New York or London. There is no difficulty that cannot be easily overcome, and yet nobody can be induced to rummage about the ruins of ancient Merv and tell us who lived there and what happened to them.

There is not a single perfect building in an area of from twenty to forty square miles, thickly covered with crumbling walls, where three famous cities have risen and flourished and fallen, but many a lofty dome and much masonry remain in their original condition. The first city, called Giaour Kala — that is, the first we know about — is believed to have been founded by Zoroaster, the Persian fire worshipper — date unknown. The second is said to have been built by Iskander — the Turkoman name for Alexander

the Great — upon the ruins of the first, which he destroyed on his return from India, 328 B.C. The third city is attributed to Alp Arslan, "the Great Lion," and was destroyed in the twelfth century by a son of Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes.

The tomb of Alp Arslan still stands, partly preserved. The inscription which Genghis is said to have written upon it can no longer be found, but it was this:

"All ye who have seen the glory of Alp Arslan exalted to the heavens, come hither to Merv and behold it buried in the dust."

The tomb of Sanjar, erected 1100 A.D., is 110 feet high from the ground to the crest of the dome and was built of brick covered with Persian tiles. Much of the porcelain veneer is still preserved, and the beautiful blue tints have not been dimmed by the ages. A curious feature is the use of that common design known as "the wall of Troy" in the friezes.

There are Persian tiles enough among the ruins to build the biggest mosque in the world. They must have been very popular, and at the same time very expensive, because there was no way to bring them there in those days except on the backs of camels.

It was a fashion of the sultans and the khans to build their own tombs. There was much rivalry in the successive generations, and the efforts of those proud and determined men to preserve their names from oblivion challenge the admiration of the present age.

A great deal of damage is done by Turkoman pilgrims and other visitors which the Russian authorities should prevent if possible. A beautifully sculptured tomb was

recently destroyed by vandals, and wherever a tile can be detached from a wall it is carried away. An ancient writer refers to a reservoir which supplied Merv with water from the Persian mountains, but no traces can be found. The canals or aqueducts can be identified and some of them are still in use, but the reservoir has disappeared.

The Merv oasis extends forty-five miles east of the banks of the river Murghab, and then comes a barren and dreary plateau, which is so high that it must always be as it always has been. There are no indications of human life except in the spring of the year, when the flocks and herds of the Mervi pick up a little bunch of grass here and there, so little that it scarcely pays them for nibbling. This desert can never be irrigated, and therefore can never be inhabited — a strip about eighty miles wide, running north and south for 300 miles or more and bounded on the east and west by an exuberance of vegetation which tries to make up for the barren wastes. There are many great orchards on the gentle slopes, and between them fields of cotton and growing wheat, and one can follow the ariks, or irrigation ditches, with the eye because of the tall plumed grasses which grow on either side of them, five and six feet high, like the pampas grass that we have in our gardens.

This plateau presents the same phenomenon that is found upon a similar waste near Arequipa, Peru — masses of drifting sand which move hither and thither, according to the direction of the wind, but always lie in crescent-shaped mounds from five to fifteen feet high and from twenty to fifty feet across between the points. The sand is very fine. You can blow up a cloud of it with your breath and it obeys the slightest motion of the air, but, strangely enough,

whenever it changes its position, as it does with the shifting of the wind, it always assumes the form of a crescent in perfect proportions, and the natives have a notion that the same grains of sand stay together like a family, or the members of a clan, and never stray from one mound to another. Of course this is impossible to determine, but it is a pretty fancy.

In 1404 an illustrious hidalgo crossed these deserts with a camel caravan as an ambassador from the King of Spain to the court of Tamerlane, then at the zenith of his power and glory. And he wrote a book which contains a great deal of interesting description of Central Asia and its people five hundred years ago. Referring to this sand, he says: "On the banks there were great plains of sand, and the sand was moved from one spot to the other by wind, and was thrown up in curious semi-circular mounds, and the wind blew the sand from one mound to another, for it was very light, and on the ground where the wind had blown away the sand the marks of the mounds were left."

And in a description of the country by Quintus Curtius, the Roman historian and essayist, translated into English in 1553, the same phenomenon is described. The writer adds that people travel across these plains at night: "To observe the starres as they do that sayle the seas, and by the course of them directe their journey, wherefore in the daye time the countrey is wild and unpassable, when they can finde no track nor waye to go in, nor marke or signe whereby to passe."

In the construction of the railway the engineers had great difficulty with this sand, and even now, in the winter months, gangs of men are kept moving up and down the line with

shovels to dig out the track where crescent mounds have formed upon the right of way.

The Oxus River, or the Amu Daria, as it is called in modern times, is the boundary between the Russian province of Trans-Caspia and the semi-independent state of Bokhara, of which I shall have much to say hereafter. West of it the inhabitants are called Mervi, for they belonged to the former khanate of Merv. The people of Bokhara are called Usbegs and Bokharoits. The people of Samarkand are called Sarts. Their languages are distinct dialects, although similar in many respects, like Portuguese and Spanish. They can understand each other, but not accurately.

CHAPTER VI

KHIVA AND THE KIRGHIZ

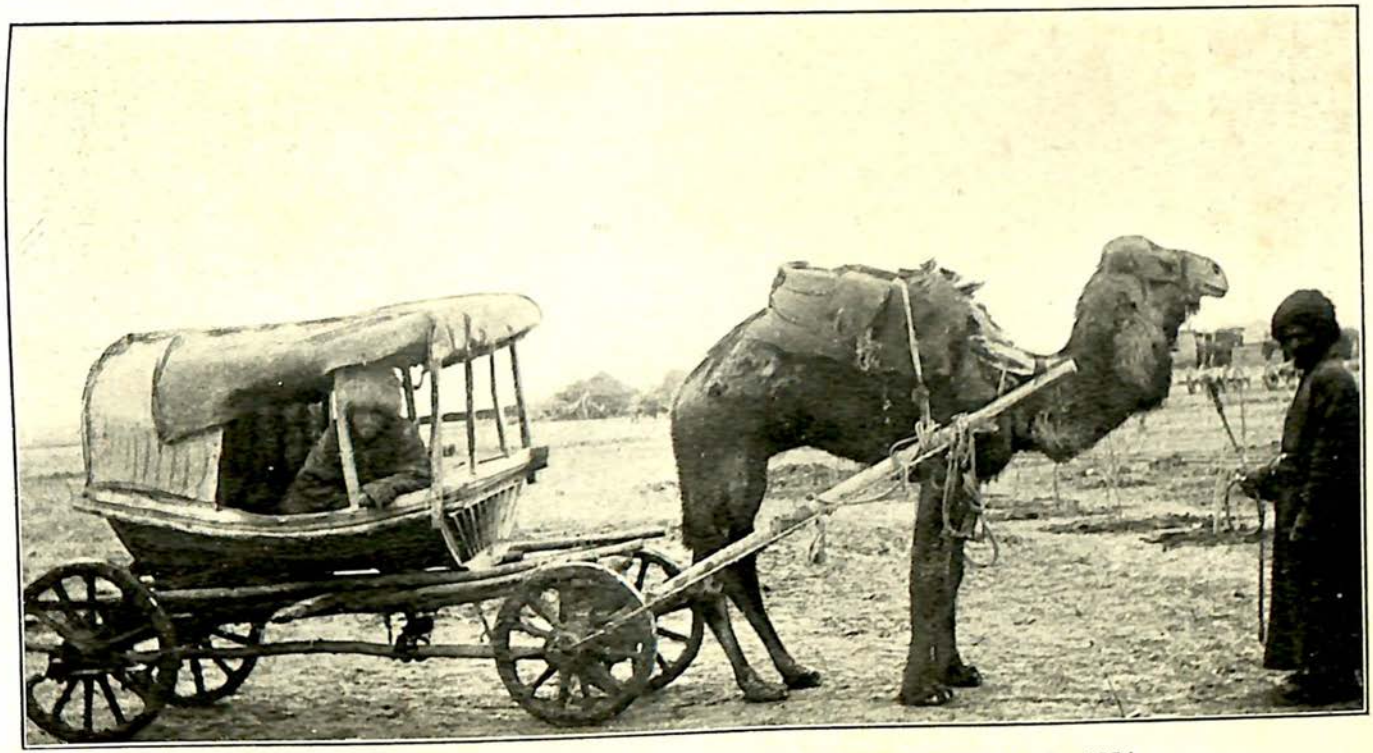
KHIVA represents a larger outlay of blood and money than any other of the several oases that have been conquered by Russia in Turkestan; and it is one of the most important. The Khiva oasis is capable of greater development than most of the others. Already a large amount of raw cotton is produced there, more than in any other section of Turkestan, and it can be doubled without constructing a new irrigation system, but, until better transportation facilities are afforded, the area planted to cotton will not be extended. Although the Amu Daria will float a considerable part of the crop to the railway at Charjui, that method is almost as expensive as carrying it by camel caravans. A railway will sometime be built, and then rapid and extended development may be expected.

Khiva is between three and four hundred miles from Merv, across a trackless desert; one of the dryest and dreariest in all Asia. The trip may be made on the back of a camel, but that is very hard for people unaccustomed to such a journey. My friend, Vladimir Fabyan Gnesin, who represents a Moscow cotton factory at Tashkend, as he formerly did in New York, once crossed the four hundred miles from Merv to Khiva in seven days in a wagon drawn by a camel, a funny-looking outfit. He didn't see a drop of water all the way except that which he carried with him.

Khiva is a thriving city, the centre of a prosperous agricultural country, with 800,000 population, and Professor Pumpelly, of Harvard, who made an archæological investigation in behalf of the Carnegie Institution at Washington, believes that cereals were cultivated there more than eight thousand years before the Christian era and that the domestication of cattle, pigs, and sheep, and the breeding of horses and camels, were common between seven and eight thousand years before Christ. He believes that agriculture preceded pastoral pursuits by several centuries; that the original settlers of this section of the globe had fixed habitations and cultivated the soil before their nomadic habits were involuntarily acquired because of the necessity for seeking new pastures for their increasing herds.

Cotton was growing wild from the beginning of time, but was not cultivated until many centuries later, and American cotton dates from the Russian occupation. There are to-day in Khiva several American cotton gins and compresses, and two factories for extracting the oil from cotton seed. The machinery was brought in by way of the Black and the Caspian seas and carried overland from Merv on the backs of camels.

If you will look at the map of Central Asia you will see that Khiva is about equidistant from Persia on the south, the Aral Sea on the north, and the Caspian Sea on the west; and that it is situated on the west bank of the Amu Daria River, surrounded by deserts in every direction, except in the valley of the Amu. It has always been an important town and has had a large trade in cattle, horses, camels, sheep, and goats, as well as the products that are derived from them.



TRANSPORTATION DE LUXE ON THE DESERTS OF CENTRAL ASIA.

The shipments of wool are next in amount to those of cotton and were formerly much larger.

Khiva is very old, older than history, and at one time was celebrated for its colleges and the scholarship of its priests. The mullah in charge of the library of the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople once showed me a book which he said was written in Turki, a dead language older than Sanscrit or Arabic, the original basis of the present Turkish tongue, and he declared that nobody in Constantinople was able to read it. It could only be deciphered by some venerable priests in Khiva, where, he said, the most learned men in the world were living. While Khiva does not entirely merit that reputation to-day, it was at one time the centre of theological and literary activity in Asia, and as the capital of a khanate attracted men of wealth and fame and ambition.

The Russians first came into contact with the Khivans during the early part of the seventeenth century. In 1620 a band of Cossacks plundered a caravan of Khivan merchants and, having found out from them about the wealth of their city, dashed across the desert and raided the town, which was taken absolutely by surprise and suffered an entirely new experience. The Cossacks loaded a thousand carts with their spoils and carried off a thousand women, but soon paid the penalty of their audacity. Their success made them reckless, and a band of Kirghiz, starting in pursuit, drove them into the desert, where all those who were not cut down in their saddles perished of thirst. The memory of their exploit is one of the most vivid pages in Khivan history.

It was a long time before the Cossacks of the Don learned the fate of their comrades, and when the knowledge came

to them they sent another expedition of 2,000 warriors to punish the Khivans, but most of them died in the desert. A third expedition fared even worse, for those who survived the perils of thirst and starvation were captured and made slaves by the Khivans. Several managed to escape and found their way back to Russia, from whom a knowledge of Khiva came to Peter the Great.

Soon afterwards that enterprising sovereign received information from the governor of Siberia that gold was to be found along the valley of the Amu Daria, and two expeditions were fitted out to explore the country, one starting from Siberia and the other from the Caucasus. The former went as far as the valley of the Syr Daria. The latter fell into the same trap in which the Cossacks had been caught, and those who survived the desert were apportioned among their captors as slaves. The khan of Khiva sent the head of Prince Bekovitch, the commander of the Russian expedition, as a present to the emir of Bokhara, who, however, was afraid to accept it.

These events advertised Khiva to the world, and several adventuresome spirits managed to cross the desert and reach the city. Some of them were allowed to escape alive, others were detained in bondage, and the enslavement of several Russian adventurers who fell into the hands of the Khivans caused Russia to undertake a new expedition in 1829. An army of 5,000 men with 10,000 camels attempted to cross the desert, but they were obliged to turn back before they got halfway, and one-third of those who started reached the shores of the Caspian in a wretched, starving condition, with only a thousand of their camels. In 1840 another attempt was made, and up to 1869 and

1870 there were constant and serious causes of provocation.

The Khivans defied the Czar and all his army, and felt themselves entirely protected by the fortifications with which nature had encompassed them in the form of a desert. In 1872, however, a new expedition was sent out under command of General Kaufmann, who had conquered eastern Turkestan, with a larger force and a better equipment than any previous party had been provided with. Accompanying the expedition was His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nicholas Constantinovitch and the Grand Duke Eugene, cousins of the Czar. There was much opposition to the undertaking in Russia, and the vote in the Imperial Council, presided over by the Czar in person, stood 35 to 9 in favour, with Prince Gortchakoff, the Prime Minister, in the negative. General Kaufmann was given full powers and was authorized to enter into negotiations with the khan for his submission and a protectorate from Russia similar to that which the emir of Bokhara had recently accepted.

About 5,000 men and 12,000 camels made up the expedition and every precaution was taken for its safety. As the column advanced explorers were sent ahead to find water and to dig wells in anticipation of the approach of the troops. In that way a line of water holes now marks the Russian trail from Tashkend to the Aral Sea, but there were wide plateaus of sand where no water could be found, and for several weeks General Kaufmann led his weary and thirsty men hither and thither until the desert of Kizil-Kum was strewn with the skeletons and decaying bodies of camels, horses, and human beings, camp equipage, officers' baggage,

rifles, and other munitions of war. Much ammunition and stores which had to be abandoned were buried in the sand with the intention of sending out detachments to recover them. Of the 12,000 camels with which the expedition started only 1,200 survived, and only twelve or fifteen horses out of several thousand. When half his men were lost, Kaufmann's imperious spirit was sunk so deeply in despair that he wrote a pitiful valedictory explaining and defending his action, and gave orders that if anything should happen to him the command of the remnant of the expedition was to be given, not to General Golovatcheff, the next in rank, but to Colonel Trotzky, his chief of staff.

The limit of endurance was almost reached, and the entire command would have perished within a few days, when the scouts happened to capture a ragged Kirghiz, who told them that a few miles to the right of the trail were the wells of Alty-Kuduk. General Kaufmann handed him a canteen and offered him one hundred rubles if he would fill it with water. Before night the nomad returned with a dozen dripping canteens suspended from his shoulder, and the column was turned toward the wells, which were found to be few, but filled with water. The expedition was thus saved, and, after recovering from its fatigue, pushed on to the capture of Khiva, which was accomplished without much difficulty, and on June 11, 1872, a "Te Deum" for the repose of the soul of Peter the Great was sung in one of the mosques by the soldiers.

Khiva at last was in the hands of the Russians, but at a frightful cost. The khan fled, but afterwards came to the Russian camp and gave himself up. General Kaufmann restored him to authority and appointed a special council

or divan, composed of Russian officers and the "elder statesmen" of Khiva, to advise him in the administration of the government. Kaufmann issued a proclamation defining the policy and intentions of the Czar, assuring the people that they would not be interfered with as long as they lived quietly and occupied themselves with their ordinary pursuits. Strict orders were given for the soldiers to take nothing from the inhabitants and to pay cash for whatever they accepted. One soldier was sentenced to be hanged for stealing a cow, six were ordered shot for robbing houses, but at the personal request of the two grand dukes the men were pardoned, on the ground that their minds were unsettled by the hardships of the campaign and the loss of their baggage.

The people of Khiva were surprised, but satisfied, and presented a memorial to General Kaufmann, accepting Russian authority with gratitude. Slavery was abolished by proclamation, and about 30,000 who were in bondage, mostly Persian prisoners of war, were released and allowed to go back to their country or remain in Khiva, as they pleased. Finally General Kaufmann signed a treaty with the khan of Khiva in which the latter renounced his independence, and acknowledged himself a faithful servant of the Czar, promising not to undertake any military expeditions or to enter into negotiations or communication with neighbouring khans, except through the Russian authorities, and agreeing to pay 2,000,000 rubles, in installments of 200,000 rubles a year, as indemnity to cover the expenses of the war.

In 1874, two years later, the khan was deposed for treason, and the khanate of Khiva was made a part of the Trans-

Caspian province and placed under the authority of the governor-general, who resides at Askabad.

Thirty years ago the entire world was electrified by the stories of "Burnaby's ride to Khiva," which was heralded as one of the most daring and audacious acts of heroism ever performed. The hero was Capt. Fred Burnaby of the Horse Guards, a rich, handsome, popular Englishman, who wrote a book to describe his experience and of course it had a wide circulation. But since the actual facts have been known, the feat is considered neither difficult nor dangerous, and was performed by hundreds of Cossacks and Russian officers about the same time. Of danger, there was none whatever. The steppes all around Khiva were as safe as those of central Russia, and the trail was plain. The weather, which was cold when Burnaby started, grew warmer within a few days and he and his party were abundantly supplied with warm clothing and had a kibitka, one of the tents in which the Turkomans and Kirghiz spend the winter on the plains of Turkestan. Furthermore Burnaby had an escort provided with excellent horses and three camels to carry his equipment. He made the journey of 370 miles in thirteen days, and it was after the capture and occupation of that city by the Russians. At the time of Burnaby's journey the Russian outposts were stretched at frequent intervals along his trail and merchants were going and coming.

This famous ride was insignificant compared with that of Captain Marsh of the British army a few years previous. He rode fourteen hundred miles from Asia Minor to India through Persia and Afghanistan, among the wild tribes, without escort or even an extra horse. Nor can it be

compared with a three-thousand-mile ride made by Captain MacGregor in 1875, the entire distance from Asia Minor to the Chinese mountains. Yet, such is the caprice of fame, not one person in a million ever heard of Marsh or MacGregor, while every schoolboy in England and many in America were thrilled by Burnaby's book.

The most daring and dangerous of such exploits in modern times was the chase of the Russian army by Januarius Aloysius MacGahan, of Toledo, Ohio, a correspondent of the New York *Herald*, who was sent to Turkestan to observe and report the war of conquest. MacGahan reached the Caspian Sea several weeks after the departure of the Russian army, and on April 30, 1872, with an interpreter and a young Kirghiz to look after the horses, started across the desert. As a journalistic achievement it was never surpassed, and was never approached, except, perhaps, by the ride of Archibald Forbes from Ulundi to the coast of Africa through a forest swarming with Zulus. MacGahan was in the saddle for thirty days, and made nine hundred and thirty miles. Sometimes he was entirely without food and he and his native companion nearly perished from thirst. He was several times surrounded by hostile natives and his escapes were miraculous.

MacGahan afterwards took part in the Carlist war in Spain, in which he narrowly escaped being hanged as a spy. He investigated the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria for the London *Daily News*; he represented the same paper during the war between Russia and Turkey in 1877–1878, and nursed Lieut. F. V. Greene, now Major-General Greene, U.S.A. (retired), through a siege of typhoid fever. Greene was the military attaché of the United States legation in

St. Petersburg and was sent to observe the war. MacGahan caught the disease from Greene and died in a Russian camp. He was buried in Constantinople and a few years later his body was brought back to the United States upon a naval cruiser and buried beside his father and mother in a Toledo cemetery.

MacGahan reached Khiva and entered that city before the Russian army arrived, and remained there through the siege. Burnaby did not arrive until two years later.

Another remarkable feat of journalistic enterprise that occurred about the same time was the ride of O'Donovan, son of a famous Irish scholar and antiquary, through Persia to Merv, reaching that city in advance of the Russian army. O'Donovan represented the London *Daily News*, and with two servants, a Persian and a Kurd, he crossed the mountains that now form the boundary between Persia and Turkestan, and after a ride of 140 miles reached the city of Merv, where the Turkomans were preparing to defend themselves against the Russian advance. He was the first foreigner to enter that city and the first European to traverse that route. He did not know what sort of a reception he would have at Merv. The chances were against a friendly one, but the people received him kindly, although, fearing lest he was a Russian spy, they made him a prisoner for twenty days. He finally gained their confidence, and was not only able to serve his newspaper, but his presence proved of great advantage to the Turkomans in their dealings with the Russian invaders.

Turkestan is believed to be one of the oldest spots on this dear old world, and, according to the records that time has made in the book of nature, the carving on the rocks

and the scattered signs of culture that are buried deep down beneath the surface, human beings were living there, cultivating the ground and raising cattle, sheep, and children, more than ten thousand years ago. To study the physiography of the Central Asian deserts and oases and the human and animal remains that are buried under the dust of ages, the Carnegie Institution at Washington sent out an expedition in 1904 to make explorations in Turkestan, hoping to discover something concerning the people of that prehistoric civilization, their origin, their growth, their environment, and their influence upon the development of the rest of the human race. This expedition consisted of Dr. Raphael Pumpelly, of Harvard University; Dr. Hubert Schmidt, archæologist; Ellsworth Huntington, assistant and interpreter; Langdon Warner, Miss Hildegarde Brooks, and R. Welles Pumpelly, physiographer and surveyor. They spent the year of 1904 among the deserts and oases of Turkestan and made an elaborate report, which has been published in two ponderous volumes by the Carnegie Institution. These, like all its publications, are for sale at cost price.

Professor Pumpelly, in summing up the results of his work, says: "The investigation was proposed because, (1) there is a school that still holds the belief that Central Asia is the region in which the great civilizations of the far East and of the West had their origins; and (2) because of the supposed occurrence in that region in prehistoric times of great changes in climate, resulting in the formation and recession of an extensive Asian Mediterranean, of which the Aral, Caspian, and Black seas are the principal remnants.

"It had long seemed to me that a study of Central Asian

archæology would probably yield important evidence in the genealogy of the great civilizations, and of several, at least, of the dominant races, and that a parallel study of the traces of physical changes during quaternary time might show some coincidence between the phases of social evolution and the change in environment; further, that it might be possible to correlate the physical and human records and thus furnish a contribution to the time scale of recent geology.

"In our earliest historical records we find the country occupied as now by dwellers in numerous cities, surrounded by deserts in which lived nomad peoples. To what different races may they have belonged? Whence did they come into the land? What were their civilizations and what their relations to other civilizations and to those of the modern world? These are our questions, and they can be answered only to a greater or less extent by a study of the results of excavation and in the concentrated light of comparative science in archæology, ethnology, and language, and of survivals in arts and customs; for the answers to some of these questions will be found rooted deep in the human strata of the ancient world.

"The ruins of ancient Merv are said to cover about thirty square miles and consist of several cities of different ages. The ruins of Paikent represent the type of cities abandoned for lack of water and then buried by the progressing desert sands. Paikent was a great centre of wealth and of commerce between China and the west and south till in the early centuries of our era. Next to those of Merv the ruins of Samarkand are the most extensive. Its position must have made it an important centre of commerce and wealth probably throughout the whole period of prehistoric

occupation, as it has been during historic times. Situated in the heart of the very fertile oasis of the Zerafshan River, it lies also on the easiest caravan routes connecting China and eastern Turkestan with Afghanistan, India, and Persia.

"Samarkand has, even within the past two thousand years, been sacked, destroyed, and rebuilt many times. Like Merv, its rebuildings have often been on adjoining sites. The most ancient seems to be the plateau to which tradition assigns the site of the Maracanda of Alexander the Great. It is covered to a great extent with Mohammedan cemeteries, with some traces of Mussulman occupation, and with fragments of pottery and of bricks. The former walls of the city are represented now by ridges rising twenty or thirty feet above the surface within. The many immense and wonderfully decorated mosques built by Tamerlane, though now falling into ruins, belong among the wonders of the world; and this not only on account of their great size, but also because of the beauty of their decoration. Seen from Afrosiab, these ruins tower high above the rich foliage of the oasis city, evidence of the wealth of treasure that Tamerlane had accumulated in Turkestan within two centuries after Genghis Khan had sacked the country and massacred most of its population.

"Our reconnaissance covered a territory nearly fourteen hundred miles long. It was necessarily only of a preliminary character, and intended to supply a general idea of the problems to be solved and of the best points at which to begin.

"Archæologically, this region has, through a long period, been a centre of production and commerce, connecting the eastern, western, and southern nations, and its accumulating

wealth has made it repeatedly the prey of invading armies. It has been from remote time the field of contact and contest between the Turanian and Aryan stocks; but its problems, both physical and archæological, are parts of the greater problem underlying the study of the development of man and his civilization of the great continent and of the environment conditioning that development.

"The many fragmentary peoples surviving in the remote corners and protected mountain fastnesses of Asia, preserving different languages, arts, and customs, indicate a very remote period of differentiation, with subsequent long periods for separate development. They point also to the long periods of unrest and battling in which the survivors of the vanquished were forced into their present refuges. Asia is thus the field for applying all the comparative sciences that relate to the history of man. The materials lie in cave deposits, in rock pictographs, in tumuli, dolmens, and ruined towns, in languages, customs, religions, designs, patterns, and anthropological measurements."

Science has never been able to solve the mystery as to the disappearance of the races which formerly occupied these deserts, and the causes of their disappearance are equally mysterious. There are, however, various theories on the subject, some investigators believing that the failure of the supply of moisture necessary for their crops or the destruction of their irrigation systems caused their settlements to be abandoned. Others are convinced that the hostile tribes destroyed each other in war. Professor Pumpelly, taking Persia as his theme, discusses the subject as follows:

"Several theories have been advanced in explanation of the gradual ruin of Persia and its neighbours, but all of

them can be summed up under two. According to one school, in which Curzon is the most prominent writer, the climate of Persia has remained practically unaltered throughout historical time. The decay of the country is due to wars and massacres and the frightful misgovernment which has prevailed century after century. If a strong, just government were established the former conditions of prosperity would be restored. The progress which has been made under British rule in the arid portions of India and under Russian rule in Trans-Caspia shows what can be done.

"The other school, of which Blanford is the best-known representative, holds that during the last two thousand years the climate must have changed. Wars and misgovernment have been a fearful curse, but their influence is not sufficient to account for the location of large towns in places where to-day a caravan can with difficulty find a pool of brackish water. The just rule of a European power may do much in favoured localities, and it would be an immense blessing everywhere; but it cannot restore the ancient prosperity.

"The depopulation caused by wars is one of the best-known facts of history. The question now before us is whether, other conditions remaining unchanged, frequent wars must cause permanent and progressive depopulation. Examples from many lands might be quoted, but Persia itself furnishes an answer. The province of Astrabad is one of the few in Persia which is blessed with an abundant rainfall and great natural advantages. For centuries its inhabitants have been exposed to the terrible raids of the fierce Turkomans and have also had the disadvantage of a very unhealthful climate. Yet in the province of Astrabad, which has suffered so severely from these invasions, villages

of from twenty to thirty houses are being scattered every five or six hundred yards. The fertility of the region is so great that the people persisted in coming into it, in spite of the fact that their numbers were frequently decimated by the Turkomans.

"Azerbaijan, the northwestern province of Persia, furnishes a more striking example of the same sort. This, according to Curzon, is the province which, excepting only Khorasan, has more often been violated by foreign invasion than any other part of Persia. Its fertility of resources entitles it to be called the granary of northern Iran. Tabriz, the capital, has fallen the first victim to invading armies, and has been successively held by Arabs, Seljuks, Ottomans, Persians, and Russians. What the rage of conquest has spared, nature has interfered to destroy. The city has been desolated by frequent and calamitous earthquakes. Twice we hear of it being levelled to the ground. In 1392 it was sacked by Timour, whose path was strewn with ruins that vied with the convulsions of nature. Five times during the last two centuries has it again been laid low. Yet in spite of wars and calamities the fertility of the province is such that the city of Tabriz now numbers a population of nearly 200,000 and is the commercial metropolis of Persia, while the province contains 2,000,000 inhabitants, or from twenty-five to forty per square mile, according to the estimate which is put upon its area.

"If war and misgovernment are the causes of depopulation of Persia, it is remarkable that the two provinces which have suffered most from war and not less from misgovernment should now be most prosperous and least depopulated, while the two which suffered less from war and no more from mis-

government have been fearfully and, it would seem, irreparably depopulated. It is also significant that the regions which have suffered the greatest ruin are those where water is least abundant, and a decrease in the supply would most quickly be felt. Wars and misgovernment do not seem to necessarily cause depopulation, nor has that process gone on most rapidly where war has been most prevalent."

The territory north of Charjui, toward the Aral Sea, is occupied by the Kirghiz, also known as Kazaks, a nomadic tribe of nearly 2,000,000 members, with about 300,000 warriors. The Kirghiz speak a language which is considered the purest of all the Tartar dialects, although as a race they contain many foreign admixtures. The tribe was formerly divided into "the Great Horde," who occupied the eastern part of the desert; "the Middle Horde," in the central part; and "the Lesser Horde," to the west and north — all of them under their independent chiefs, but subject to a central khan, who reigned in Khiva until they became subject to the Russians in 1824. The establishment of Russian forts and garrisons in Turkestan in 1865 brought the Kirghiz immediately under Russian rule, although the khan of Khiva considered himself an independent authority until Khiva was finally conquered in 1872, when the pretence was abandoned.

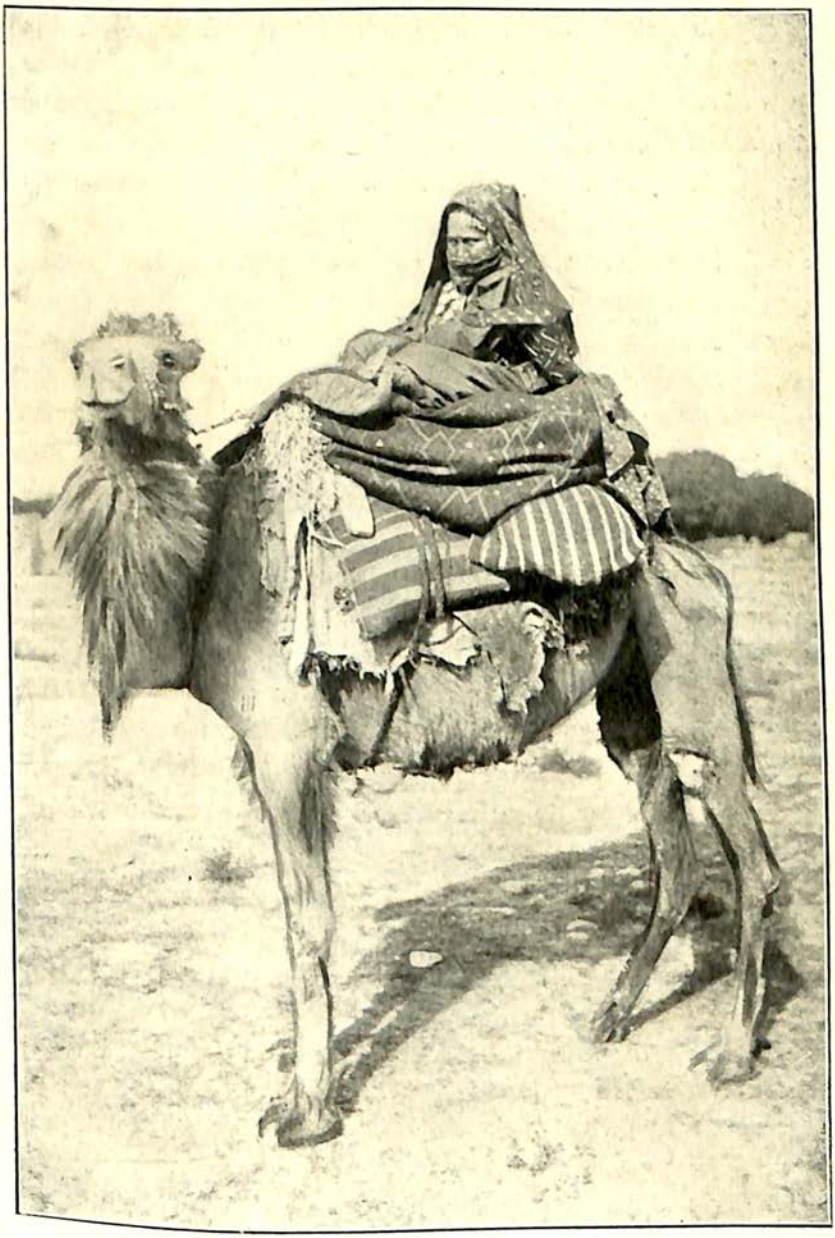
The flocks and herds of the Kirghiz form their only wealth and are the source of large incomes. They are the best breeders of cattle, sheep, and camels in Asia, and the necessary search for fresh pasture is the cause of their migrations over the steppes. Like the Bedouins of Arabia, they do not wander indiscriminately, however, but have settled quarters for the different seasons of the year, with many fixed villages

of mud huts and large cultivated areas. Agricultural pursuits are looked down upon by the haughty horsemen, but are so profitable as to counterbalance the contempt that those who plow the ground are obliged to submit to. Most of the Kirghiz warriors devote themselves entirely to breeding animals, leaving all the other work to be done by the women.

They are tireless rough riders and occupy the saddle for days at a time without showing the slightest fatigue. They are hospitable, generous, and amiable to those whom they consider friendly, but their promises are not to be depended on. They never fulfil a contract unless it is for their interest to do so. Their unreliability and untruthfulness, however, are due to indifference and laziness rather than to a vicious disposition. They are light-hearted, fickle, easily influenced, and affectionate, and one of their best traits is their respect for age and authority and their chivalry toward women.

Eugene Schuyler, who spent much time among them, says: "The Kirghiz, owing to the simplicity of their lives, are far more children of nature than other Asiatics, and have all the faults and virtues of children. Probably the first acquaintance with them will be found disagreeable, and certainly the side the casual traveller sees is their worst, but, upon knowing them more intimately, one cannot help liking and even respecting them, and it is the verdict of everyone who has lived in Central Asia that the Kirghiz are superior to all the other races."

In religion they are Mohammedans, although they have no knowledge of religious doctrines or principles, no settled priests, and few of them can read or write. They rarely pray, they neglect all of the injunctions of the Koran, as



A TURKESTAN LADY STARTING ON A JOURNEY.

they do every other moral principle, but would resent an insinuation that they are not good Mussulmans. They shave their heads and allow their beards to grow, wear baggy leather breeches, coarse shirts with wide, striped collars, and from one to three padded dressing gowns of brilliant colours, according to the weather. The rich indulge in velvet and silk robes, often heavily embroidered with gold and silver braid. The government has frequently encouraged their pride and vanity by presenting red velvet robes to the chieftains as marks of distinction. On their heads they wear little skull caps embroidered in an elaborate manner under enormous shakos of sheepskin. Much of their wealth is invested in ornaments for their saddles and bridles, which are sometimes heavy laden with silver and gold.

The Kirghiz look like Mongols and as a rule are short of stature, with round, swarthy faces, flat noses, high cheek bones, sharp black, slanting eyes, and tightly drawn eyelids.

They live in kibitkas, which are circular tents made of felt, of their own weaving, stretched over frames of willow which can be taken apart and packed easily, and one kibitka makes a load for a single camel. The entrance is protected by a flap of felt. The interior of the tent is carpeted with rugs and hung with embroideries, the trappings of horses, and the robes of the owner, of more or less value according to his wealth. A rich Kirghiz will sit upon a priceless rug, sleep upon a mattress covered with silk, and carry several hundred dollars' worth of precious metal upon his person in the form of ornaments.

The Kirghiz that wander and live in kibitkas are called kara-Kirghiz, which means black; and those who live in villages are known as Kirghiz-kaizaks, which means

"located," but you generally find them together. Every village of mud huts is surrounded by an encampment of round movable tents made of a framework of willow withes and covered with felt.

If you inquire of a Kirghiz concerning his ancestry he will tell you that Noah had nine sons, one of whom, after the flood, moved to Turkestan and settled on the banks of the Oxus. This son had forty daughters and became famous for that reason — "kir" being the Persian word for forty, and "ghiz" the word for daughters. Hence the descendants of this prolific family became known as Kirghiz and the name has stuck to them. But they have no history, no literature; scarcely a written language. Very few of them can read or write, and printed words have no meaning for them. It is believed that they are decreasing in numbers, although they have never been counted and will not permit themselves to be seen by the census agents. As soon as any attempt of that kind is made they scatter over the plains.

But comparing accounts that are given of them by ancient authors with their condition to-day it is very plain that they are a dying race.

CHAPTER VII

THE OASIS OF BOKHARA

I NEVER saw a more glowing picture of human kind than appeared on the platform as our train upon the Central Asia Railway drew up at Kagan, the station of Bokhara, the famous old city which was a centre of learning and wealth and power six hundred years ago, but to-day is chiefly known for the beautiful red rugs that are manufactured there and in that vicinity. The background of the picture was an arabesque building, a perfect example of that school of architecture, in alternate layers of light and dark gray stone, with pinnacles at the corners and a cornice of square, even notches in stone. The stations all along the Central Asia Railway, from the Caspian Sea to the Chinese boundary, are substantial buildings of stone, and of admirable design. The architects have shown a sense of what is appropriate to the individuality of each town in which they are placed, and none of them is more commendable than that at Kagan.

Scattered along the platform was a crowd of 300 or 400 human beings of all ages, representing a dozen different races, and nearly all of them clad in fantastic garb. The Turkomans could be identified by their enormous shakos of sheep or lamb-skin, some as big as a beer keg, notwithstanding the intense heat. Some of the wool was long, shaggy and curly, which gave the wearer a fierce and barbaric aspect. Others wore closely curled lamb-skin like that

which is so fashionable for ladies' wraps in the United States. There were many dark-eyed, serious-looking Persians, who always wear fezzes of black felt or lamb-skin with long, clerical frock coats buttoned up to the chin, the skirts being gathered at the waist and hanging full over the hips. There were many Jews, who can also be identified by the distinctive features of their race. The old men wore patriarchal beards under their snowy white turbans. They looked like men of intellect and learning, and of all the people in the East none carry themselves with a more dignified and serene air. The young Jews are alert and active, and the children have most interesting faces.

There was a scene in the shadow of the train that I shall never forget. A Jewish patriarch, with a long, snowy beard, a noble forehead, a prominent nose, and large, thoughtful, brown eyes, was leaving. He might have been a rabbi, and a large number of his friends, perhaps forty or fifty, had come to the station to see him off. On the Central Asia Railway the conductor gives the passenger plenty of notice before the cars start. A bell attached to a bracket over the door of the station rings three times: first, to give general warning; after five or six minutes, again, to get on board; and then, after two or three minutes more, a single stroke is followed by the whistle of the locomotive and the start.

After the first bell the Jews gathered in a circle apart from the rest of the crowd, with half a dozen little children in the centre, and the patriarch, who was going away, folded his hands upon his heart and offered a prayer, while the rest reverently bowed their heads. Then one after another, young and old, passed before him and he kissed them on both cheeks. The children came last, and he

blessed them, with his fingers resting upon their heads; then lifted each one in his arms and kissed him affectionately. Every one in the party was weeping; one of the children became hysterical and would not be comforted. He was carried away crying just as the third bell struck, when the patriarch mounted the platform of his car and extended his hands as if pronouncing a benediction.

The Usbegs, as the inhabitants of the khanate of Bokhara are called, are quite as dignified and stately in their movements as the Jews and wear the same serene expression upon their faces. They are unusually handsome men. I have never seen so many men at a railway station anywhere in the world of such impressive appearance, and the young men and boys are as handsome as their fathers.

The population of the city of Bokhara is about 325,000, including, perhaps, 250 Europeans, chiefly Russians, Germans, or Poles. There are many Persians, the descendants of slaves captured in war, and a large number of Hindus who went there to seek their fortunes. The Usbegs, who constitute the native population, belong to the aboriginal Iranian stock, and many of them are of light complexion, with blond hair and beards. Every man wears a beard, a large turban of forty folds of spotless muslin, and a long khalat or coat of silk or cotton, of radiant colours which gives him a graceful as well as a picturesque appearance. The Oriental fancy for bright colours is developed here to the highest degree. The most conservative and respectable merchant will wear a robe of alternate stripes of crimson, purple, orange, and scarlet as gracefully as an angel wears its wings.

We saw nothing of the women; strangers are not admitted to the homes, and the Bokharoits are very strict in main-

taining the old-fashioned ideas of seclusion. Women never leave their houses except when concealed behind heavy black veils of horsehair falling from the forehead to the bosom, and loosely wrapped in shawls of silk or cotton, which cover their heads as well as their bodies. A Bokharoit woman never allows her face to be seen by a man, excepting her husband and sons, from the time she is twelve years old, when she puts on a veil forever. There were no Usbeg women at the station, but we occasionally saw one at other stops getting in and out of the train, shrouded with a shawl and a black veil pulled down over her face as if she were the man in the iron mask.

There were plenty of Russian women, however, fair-faced, blond-haired Gretchens, both among the passengers and the loiterers around the station, and a row of matronly peasant wives sat behind tables laden with steaming samovars, jars of milk, bowls of hard-boiled eggs, bottles of koumiss, raspberry shrub, cider, sandwiches, and other home-made refreshments, while itinerant natives peddled sweetmeats, sherbet, tea, coffee, bread and cakes, and even cold water, among the passengers.

The oasis of Bokhara and that of Samarkand, which is 150 miles distant by rail, are due to the abundant waters of the Zerafshan River, which rises in the mountains of India and runs for 426 miles through Russian Turkestan, irrigating with its branches 250 square miles of territory of the most fertile part of Central Asia. Forty-three large canals, with a total length of 600 miles, divert the water upon the fields far and wide, and there are 600 miles of smaller canals and 939 miles of ditches, which reach every part of the oasis.

This system dates back to prehistoric times. It is described by Arabian, Egyptian, and Persian writers before the Christian era, and the Greeks called the river Zerafshan the "Polytimetus," which means "very precious," while the name means in the native tongue "the gold strewer." It is a remarkable fact that the largest supply of water comes in July from the melting snows in the mountains, when it is most needed, and the river is at its lowest level in January.

Cotton is the most important product, and after that wheat and other grain. Cotton has been grown there from the earliest times. The Spanish ambassador who visited this country in 1404, during the reign of Tamerlane, speaks of the cotton plantations and describes the vineyards and gardens and melon fields, which he said produced wonderful quantities of delicious fruit.

Between Bokhara and Samarkand all the land is under cultivation, and we saw the grain and alfalfa being harvested in an old-fashioned, clumsy way with sickles. Men cut it laboriously, creeping along on their knees, and other men, following after, pick up the stalks by handfuls and bind them with their hands in small sheaves, which are then loaded upon the back of a donkey or a camel or a man and carried to a mud hut, where it is stored until it can be thrashed or rather trampled out, as used to be done in the days of the patriarchs of the Old Testament.

Every few miles the train passes a village of mud huts where the labouring farmers live; one-story cabins like those of Egypt, of mud walls made with very little, if any, straw to hold them together. They look as if a heavy rain would melt them and wash them away. That has been the fate of several villages whose ruins we saw by the roadside.

Acres and indeed miles of the steppe are covered with roofless walls that have crumpled or have been washed down to about half their original height by the winds and the rains, and the inhabitants have calmly picked up their beds and other furniture and moved away. These mud houses are tolerable only in rainless regions, and the rainfall there varies from nothing to thirteen or fourteen inches. Sometimes the entire twelve months will pass without a drop of moisture, either rain or dew, while another year may be brightened with frequent showers, and all of the oldest inhabitants are familiar with snow.

Around the railway stations are cabins built of railway ties placed on end, such as you see in similar situations in New Mexico, Arizona, and other timberless regions of our own West. Several of the railway officials and military officers have erected log houses on the Russian plan, which are familiar to those who have travelled in the northern part of the empire, and have painted them green and blue and other bright colours. There are Russian peasants at every station, unmistakable mujiks with long blond beards and their hair chopped off around the neck as if it were cut by a washbowl. They wear the same linen blouses and broad-crowned caps that you see around the villages near Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The houses are windowless. All the light and ventilation come through the doors, and the owners have to keep patching up the walls all the time to prevent them from being worn away by the constant beating of the wind against the dry particles of mud. Inside, a mud floor, a straw mattress laid upon a platform of boards, a few simple cooking utensils and articles of furniture make up the outfit of an absolutely

comfortless home, even more comfortless than the kibitkas of the Kirghiz or the tepees of the North American Indian.

Strangers are always interested in seeing droves of camels feeding in the fields like flocks of sheep or goats, and little baby camels trailing along like kids or lambs. The camel is a good deal like the goat in his dietary. He will eat anything he can chew. All flocks and herds, including camels, are usually attended by shepherds or herdsmen, and it seems queer to see farmers wearing quilted dressing gowns of brilliant colours while watching their flocks in the pastures and while working in the fields. The children are dressed like their parents. It is the ambition of every man and child to have a silk coat like that of Joseph — of many colours.

The "Gate of Tamerlane" is a narrow gorge between lofty, jagged precipices on both sides, which the river Jizak has cut through the foot-hills. It is known on the map as the Pass of Jilanuti, and is the only way across the range without a detour of twenty-five or thirty miles in one direction or the other.

This rocky portal commands the approach to the city of Samarkand in one direction and the city of Tashkend in the other, and many a bloody conflict has been fought during the centuries for its possession. Some of the victors have boastfully inscribed a record of their triumphs upon the smooth faces of the rock, as Trajan did above the iron gates of the Danube. The oldest, carved in Arabic, announces that the great Tamerlane (Timour) passed this gate in 1369 after five days of battle with his enemies, when the Jizak ran red with their blood. "Henceforth no human being can pass without his permit." The next inscription

announces a victory of the forces of Ulugh Beg, a grandson of Tamerlane, and the other is that of Abdullah, khan of Bokhara in 1571, who boasts that he slew 400,000 of his enemies, "so that for a month the water was bloody in the River of Jizak."

Under these imperishable boasts of ancient braggarts is a small bronze tablet, bearing in relief the imperial eagle of Russia and a few words saying that "Alexander II, Czar of all the Russias, built a railway through this gate in 1892."

The conductor of our train, from whom I sought information concerning the inscriptions, gave a slightly different version. Tamerlane, he said, wrote on the rock that nobody, and especially Russians, should pass that way without his permission, and that they should not build a railway through the gorge under any circumstances; but the railway was built just the same, and the Czar now rules in this country, and he threw up his hands with an expression of defiance against the rest of the world and their armies.

The gorge of Jilanuti is very much like the royal gorge of the Arkansas in Colorado, although it is a little wider. The walls rise a thousand feet or more on either side. The Jizak goes roaring through in triumph on its way to water the oasis of Samarkand, and it does good work when it gets beyond the mountain.

On both sides of the pass for a distance of two hundred miles are ranges covered with cattle, goats, sheep, horses, and camels. It takes some time to become accustomed to black sheep, which, as you know, have disreputable associations, but out there you see nothing else, and, strange to say, black lambs are more valuable than white ones and are even worth more than sheep, because their skins, covered with fine curly

hair, with a lustre like polished ebony, are needed for miladi's wraps. The ranchmen are compelled to keep a certain number of lambs every year, of course, or their flocks would become exterminated, but most of the annual crop are sold for their skins when they are only a few months old. The meat is practically worthless.

At the station called Chernyaevo, which is 1,064 miles from Krasnovodsk on the Caspian Sea, the Central Asia Railway divides. One branch runs north to Tashkend and then on about 1,200 miles through the desert of Kizil-Kum, along the valley of the Syr Daria and the eastern shore of the Aral Sea, to the city of Orenberg and a junction with the Great Siberian Railway. Through sleeping cars run daily from Andijan to Moscow over this line, and the journey is made in five days. It is possible, therefore, to make a circular trip from the Black Sea, across the Caucasus, then across the Caspian Sea to Krasnovodsk, and from that point by railway to Moscow, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Paris, the entire distance to the English Channel being about 5,000 miles by rail.

Another branch has been surveyed from Tashkend northeastward, parallel with the Chinese boundary, to a junction with the Great Siberian Railway at Omsk. It follows the valley of the Kuragati River and then that of the River Chu, skirting the foot-hills of the Alexandrian Mountains south of Lake Balkhash. Sometime this road will be built, which will considerably shorten the journey from southern Europe and Constantinople to China, Manchuria, and Japan.

Sooner or later, also, there will be a through line from the Caspian Sea to India. The gap which remains between

Kushk, the terminus of a branch of the Central Asia Railway running south from Merv, and the borders of Afghanistan, is comparatively short, and a route has already been surveyed by M. Lessar, a Russian engineer, up to the very walls of Herat and Kandahar, and almost to the boundary of Baluchistan, the westerly province of India.

The distance from Kushk to Herat is only eighty-two miles, and from Herat to Kandahar 398 miles, making the total distance between the eastern terminus of the Russian railway system in Turkestan to the western terminus of the British railway system in India only 471 miles. M. Lessar reports that there are no engineering difficulties in the way. The route he selected follows the banks of streams and requires very little blasting, few bridges and tunnels, and the construction will not be more expensive than that of the Central Asia Railway in Turkestan. When that line is built, if ever, one can travel from the Caspian Sea to Calcutta in about six days, and the journey from London to Calcutta by rail need not be more than ten or twelve days.

There is another line in contemplation, and perhaps someday it may be built, across the extreme northern borders of Afghanistan along the valley of the Amu Daria or Oxus River into northern India via Kabul and the Khyber Pass, to join the railway system of India at Peshawur. That line, however, will have to overcome two ranges of mountains with heavy grades, and the construction would be much more expensive and difficult than that of the lower route.

The greatest obstacle and one that now seems insurmountable, is the opposition of the British government to any scheme that will bring Afghanistan into closer rela-

tions with Russia or make its cities more easy of access for commerce or for war. The Russian outposts, all strongly fortified, are now only fifty-five miles as the crow flies from Herat, while the British outposts are 460 miles distant. Herat is the most important city of Afghanistan except Kandahar, and Kabul, the capital.

In the event of war between England and Russia the latter would of course naturally strike immediately at India, the most sensitive spot in the British Empire, with two lines of advance—first, from Merv via Kushk across to Herat; and, second, from Samarkand and Tashkend via the Oxus upon Kabul. Russia could reach both of these places in 10 or 15 per cent of the time that the British army would require to come from India. The Czar has 125,000 fighting men under arms in Turkestan to-day, while most peaceful relations are existing. With two lines of railway, one to Moscow and the other to the Caucasus, he could send a million troops without interruption, while Great Britain would be compelled to ship all of her re-enforcements and all of her supplies to India by steamer through the Strait of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal.

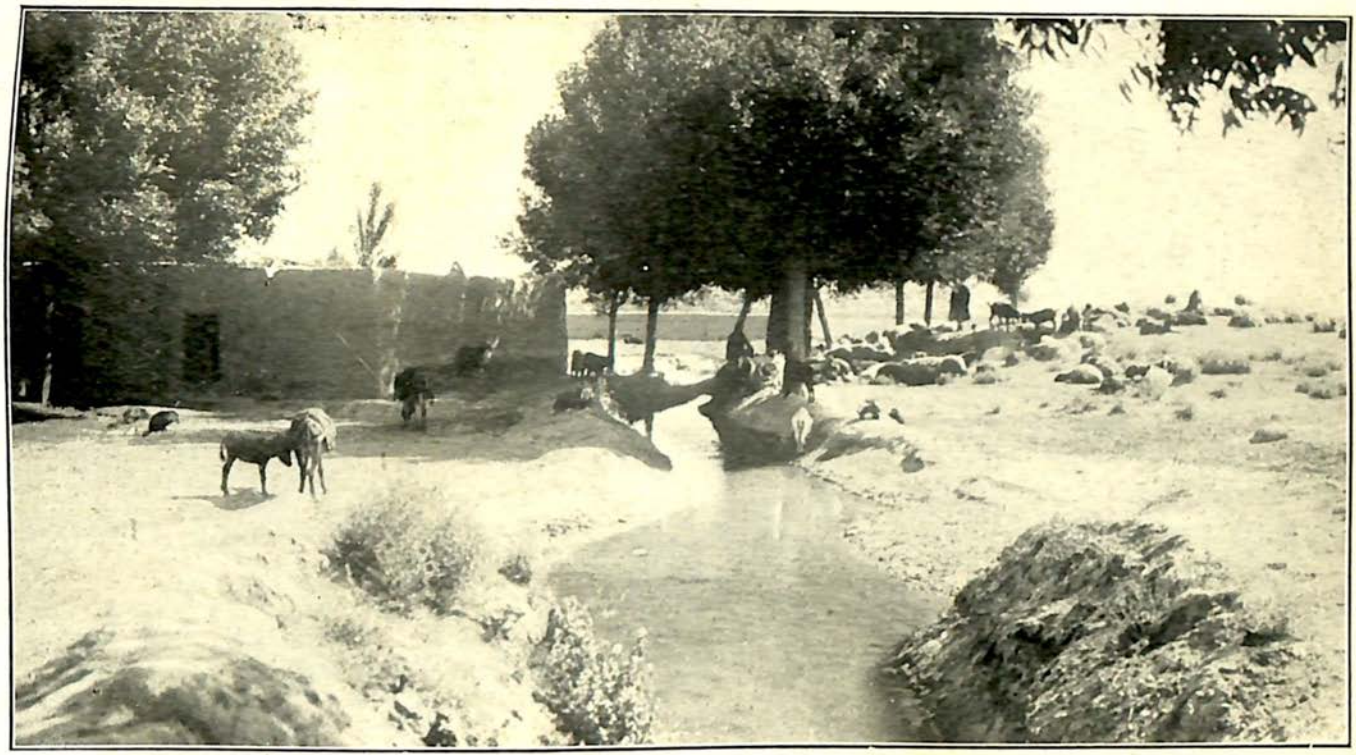
It will thus be seen that Russia enjoys an incalculable advantage if hostilities ever occur, and she would have an equal advantage in commerce if her system of railways in Turkestan were ever united with the British system in India.

Afghanistan has long been regarded as the private preserve of English manufacturers, who distribute their goods by means of native caravans through Khyber Pass, which is the terminus of the railway system of India. Since the Trans-Caspian Railway has been built, the manufacturers of Moscow, through the merchants of Bokhara, Samarkand,

Merv, Kokand, and other cities, have been building up an extensive and valuable interchange of merchandise with the Afghans. Russia has thus been provided with a new and profitable market for her merchandise. The merchants of Bokhara and the other cities fully realize their advantages, and the trade has affected the political relations in a quiet but influential manner. The Russians are sending cotton sheeting and prints, woollen fabrics, sugar, hardware, drugs, matches, and every other sort of merchandise into Afghanistan in exchange for wool, skins, indigo, medicinal plants, tea, and other natural products of India. The cotton-goods trade alone, which is growing more rapidly than any other, is a serious matter for England just now, and the falling off of the imports of that character into Afghanistan from British sources corresponds in a significant manner with the increase of the Russian exports. The factories of Moscow can sell plain and printed cotton goods cheaper than those of Manchester, and if a trade war should take place the Russians would have every advantage. In fact, British merchandise is being gradually pushed out of Afghanistan, while Russian goods are taking its place.

The exports from Turkestan, caravan borne between Bokhara and Afghanistan, have increased 400 per cent within the last ten years, and if the figures could be obtained from other shipping points, I am told that similar increases would be shown. You will therefore appreciate the significance of the situation, commercially as well as politically to Great Britain. The aggressive policy of the Russians in Turkestan threatens her commercial prosperity in the East and her most valuable colonial possessions in war.

The anxiety with which every movement on the part



GLIMPSE OF A TURKESTAN FARM HOUSE.

of the Russians is regarded in India has long been the source of amusement and ridicule by outsiders, but although the advantages are entirely on the Russian side, her officials in Turkestan seem to be quite as apprehensive. Every Englishman who appears in that vicinity is regarded with suspicion and is watched with greatest vigilance until he leaves the country. And if you can manage to get into confidential relations with a Russian official he will tell you in whispers that the government has indisputable evidence that the British Foreign Office in London is receiving regular and voluminous reports from Armenian spies in every city of Turkestan. What these imaginary reports contain it is impossible to say, for there is nothing, so far as I could discover, that the Russians should object to the whole world knowing, and if England is employing Armenians as spies in Turkestan she is wasting the money she pays them.

Charjui, another typical Russian town, about halfway between Merv and Bokhara, is of importance because it is the only station of the Central Asia Railway upon the Amu Daria, or Oxus, River. It irrigates a vast area of desert for more than 900 miles, including the oasis of Khiva, which is one of the most important in Turkestan and one of the oldest human settlements on the globe. The Amu Daria, which Lord Curzon rhapsodizes about in his book on Central Asia, is navigable for stern-wheel flatboats, like those on the Ohio River and other tributaries of the Mississippi, and they carry a good deal of cotton and other freight from Khiva to Charjui during the season of high water, but are compelled to lay up a large part of the year because of sand bars, which check navigation. At Charjui the products find a way to market over the railroad.

The Amu Daria is the largest river in Asia and the most important for these reasons in Turkestan. In addition to the irrigating systems which it supplies, a large quantity of water is shipped by train to desert points along the railway, both east and west, and at the western end of a long bridge that carries the railway tracks is a pumping station, where the tank cars are filled.

It is the most important bridge in Asia, about 5,000 feet long and built of iron, and there is a story connected with it that sounds like a miracle to those who are familiar with Russian official morals and methods. A certain gentleman, whose name, unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain, was awarded a contract for building this bridge for 6,000,000 rubles by the Ministry of War at St. Petersburg. At the end of the second year after the contract was let the work was completed, inspected, accepted, and paid for in full, whereupon the contractor returned a check for 3,000,000 rubles to the Minister of War with an explanation that the bridge had cost less than half the contract price because of miscalculations, and he, therefore, could not accept the money. You can imagine the sensation that such an unprecedented act caused, but the government promptly recognized the honesty of the contractor as fully as possible. He was decorated with the Order of St. George; he was granted a certificate of honour, presented with a handsome residence in the city of St. Petersburg, and an imperial edict was issued exempting him and the head of his family from taxation forever. The offence has never been repeated, and many people believe that the contractor was insane, but so far as I know he lived happily ever afterward and the Lord prospered him.

Charjui is the central and the largest market for that soft, glossy, black curly fur now so fashionable and known as Persian lamb-skin. The skins come from the flocks of the Tekkes, the Kirghiz, and other tribes of Turkomans which range upon the deserts of Khiva, Kizil-Kum, and Kara-Kum, as far east as the mountains of China and as far north as the Aral Sea. The lambs are killed when they are about six months old, being bred entirely for the skins, which are in great demand in all parts of the Western world for dress trimmings, ladies' wraps, muffs, and collars, and in Persia and certain parts of Turkestan for hats. They cost in the Charjui market from five to twenty rubles a skin (a ruble being worth fifty cents in our money), and are sold in packages of one dozen.

The farmers bring them in and the commission merchants in the several cities have agents canvassing the villages and kibitkas of the Turkomans, buying them for cash. After they are brought in they are assorted, classified, put in packages, and sold at an exchange very much like the Board of Trade in Chicago or Produce Exchange in New York, or similar organizations, the price being regulated by the demand and the supply, as is the case with every other commodity. Just now prices are very high, because Persian lamb is in fashion throughout the world, especially in England and America. The younger the lamb the finer the fur and the higher the price, although the wastage is greater than in older skins. It takes from twenty to twenty-five lamb-skins to make one of the long cloaks that ladies wear. An ordinary muff of the fashionable size requires three or four skins and a Persian fez requires an entire skin.

The market is held in a large khan; that is, an open courtyard, surrounded by two-story buildings, usually with one entrance. The ground floor is occupied as warehouses for the storage of skins, the upper floor is used for the offices of the commission men, and during the greater part of the day the dealers sit around cross legged at their thresholds with bunches of skins stacked up around them waiting for customers. Trading in lamb-skins is conducted very much like that in every other sort of produce. The buyers take advantage of an abundance of skins and the sellers of a scarcity, to manipulate prices.

The buyers ship to Germany, England, and France, and all the big fur houses of London, Geneva, Moscow, and other European cities have resident agents there. The trade has grown in importance very rapidly during the last few years.

Charjui has a native governor, and a system of local self-government which is entirely in the hands of the natives, and it seems to work very well, although the Russian authorities keep a sharp lookout for any lapses in loyalty and sand bars in the political sea. There seems to be perfect peace, however, and a good understanding between the conquerers and the conquered. Russia has certainly set a good example for England to follow in her treatment of the natives of India, particularly in giving them as little government as possible and limiting the exercise of Russian authority to a minimum.

The Aral Sea is a curious body of water about 270 miles long and 160 miles wide, and very shallow, while the surrounding country is a flat, desolate, and lifeless desert. The deepest spot is 240 feet, but along the eastern and southern shores

the water is so shallow as to prohibit the use of boats, and sometimes when the wind is strong it will blow the sea away and leave the bottom uncovered as far as the eye can reach. There are no harbours, and because of the difficulty of reaching the shore the sea is practically useless for navigation. In two or three places at the northern and narrower end, docks have been built a mile or more from the bank to points where the water is deep enough to load and unload a vessel, but three-fourths of the entire shore line is useless for docking purposes, because the water will not be more than a few inches, or perhaps a foot or two, deep several miles from the beach.

The level of the Aral Sea is 170 feet above that of the Caspian and thirty-three feet above that of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean. There is no outlet, but the inflow of fresh water from the two great rivers, the Amu Daria and the Syr Daria, is lapped up by the sun as fast as it comes. The evaporation is much greater in shallow than in deep water, and probably no other body of water of equal area has less depth.

There is very little salt in the analysis of the water of the Aral Sea, but it contains a great deal of soda, magnesia, potassium, and sulphate of lime. To the taste the water is only brackish, and horses and cattle will drink it. It was formerly a part of the Caspian, and it is now only a little below the level of the desert that surrounds it. Its waters formerly found their way into the Arctic Ocean and a slight amount of excavation would reopen the old channel. There is one town on the Aral Sea and that is a station on the railway which connects the Central Asia and the Great Siberian roads, running north and south

through the desert of Kizil-Kum. The track skirts the eastern shores for forty or fifty miles and a station named Kasalinsk handles whatever freight comes off that body of water.

In the neighbourhood of Charjui, and within sight from the railway track between that city and Merv, are many ruins; vast areas of roofless mud walls, which represent more or less the ravages of war, but are not altogether due to that cause. Some of the towns were voluntarily abandoned by their former residents because of the lack of water. Several have been shaken down by earthquakes and in some cases the inhabitants have removed en masse to more convenient points along the railway. It doesn't cost much to build a mud house. There is plenty of material within reach of the poorest comer and a new town can be erected about as easily as an old one can be repaired. Hence the Turkomans, who love excitement and have strong social inclinations, have seldom been unwilling to pick up their lares and penates and build a new lot of mud cabins beside the railway track, just to be near the centre of things and enjoy the excitement of seeing the trains go by. They are a migratory race by nature and two-thirds of the population still live in kibitkas, the round tents peculiar to Turkestan, but similar to the tepees of the North American Indians.

The walls and roofs of kibitkas are made of braided willows and are covered with felt. A curtain of felt, made in their own tents, serves for a door. The interior is carpeted and sometimes hung with rugs, according to the wealth of the occupant. Sometimes we found very valuable rugs upon the floors of kibitkas. The walls are also hung with

saddlebags, riding cloaks, embroideries, and other ornaments, and the floor is covered with cushions, pillows, and blankets. There may be chests filled with silks, embroideries, and ornaments for the women of the family, who wear coins sewed upon their caps, upon the breasts of their blouses, their girdles, and other outer garments, and have additional evidences of wealth in the form of bracelets, necklaces, and anklets of heavy silver rudely worked. The favourite wife of a Turkoman chieftain will carry a load of several pounds of silver ornaments, and without complaining wear a necklace as heavy as the collar of a mastiff.

Although a portion of the native population is settled in fixed villages and cultivates the ground, the majority still live like the Bedouins of Arabia, and from the car windows we could see them on horseback and on camels, and they are always standing around the stations waiting for the train to come. The men have a dignified and stately bearing and serious, thoughtful faces which do not conform to the gay colours they wear upon their backs. They are crazy to travel. They are never weary of the motion of the cars, and the third-class carriages of the train are always crowded with them. The first-class passengers are nearly all army officers, and most of the second-class also, but they seem to be of lesser rank.

As the train approaches Bokhara the landscape brightens again, and far away across the barren tableland, which has been lifted above the surrounding country, you can see evidences of verdure ten or twelve miles before the boundaries of the oasis are reached. Then you first come to cultivated areas surrounded by mud walls six and eight feet high, with the boughs of fruit trees hanging over them and poplars

standing in low rows like sentinels to guard them on either side. These enclosures are the country seats of the rich men of Bokhara, who are compelled to protect their gardens and their fruit in this way from the wandering tribesmen of the desert and the followers of the caravans that even now are continually crossing the sandy wastes. As long ago as the tenth century an Arab traveller wrote a description of this country in which he described the suburbs of Bokhara as the most beautiful scenes on earth, and declared that he never again hoped to see anything so lovely as where the green of the earth and the azure of the heavens were united among the villas of that noble city.

CHAPTER VIII

"BOKHARA THE NOBLE: THE SUBLIME"

EVERYBODY has heard of Bokhara, because of its rugs, if for no other reason, and it is usually conceded to be the most interesting town in Turkestan, although there is room for a difference of opinion, so far as Samarkand is concerned. The two cities, however, are very much unlike, as different as San Francisco and Boston, although there is nothing in either of them, except the traditions of culture, that would resemble Boston, and nothing but their total depravity that would resemble San Francisco. As one star differs from another star in glory, so Bokhara and Samarkand each has its strong points of individuality, its history and traditions, its romances, tragedies, growth and decay. The ancients called Samarkand "the Queen of Asia," and Bokhara "the Noble, the Sublime." But if anybody should start out to search for the sublime in Bokhara to-day he would become more and more disheartened as he proceeded. It is in all respects the most antiquated, the most depraved, the ugliest, and the least progressive city in Turkestan, although there are fascinations in such places that more enterprising and attractive cities do not possess.

Bokhara differs from other cities of Central Asia also because it is nominally independent of Russian authority. All the other cities and provinces are a part of the Russian Empire, governed by a viceroy of the Czar from Tashkend.

Bokhara is entirely surrounded by them, but its territory, about one hundred and fifty miles by three hundred miles in extent, is the only independent province between the Caspian Sea and the Chinese border and between the mountains of Persia, Afghanistan, and India, and the Arctic Ocean. This happens to be so because the emir was either too cowardly or too indolent or too wise to resist the Russian invasion. When Samarkand, Khiva, Merv, and the other provinces were fighting for their political lives, Bokhara lay down in the road and appealed for the Great Bear's protection. Therefore its independence was not disturbed, and, with the consent of Russia, it continues to be an independent khanate, governed by a khan or emir of autocratic powers, who collects the taxes, directs the expenditure of the funds, appoints the officials and the courts, and performs executive, legislative, and judicial functions through subordinates, who are responsible to him alone. The khanate is a petty autocracy, subject to Russian approval, divided into districts governed by officials called begs, who exercise similar authority to the satraps of ancient Persia. They are autocratic in their way and responsible only to the emir, who appoints, removes, or punishes them at will; and they in turn have the authority to put to death any person who offends them, or to deprive him of his property or his liberty.

The late Emir Mozaffur-ed-din died in 1885, a drunken debauchee, leaving five sons. Before his death he asked the Russian authorities to recognize his fourth son, Sayid Abdul Ahad, as his successor. Although he was the child of a slave, the young man was his father's favourite, and was sent to St. Petersburg to be educated. At the time of his father's death Abdul, a mere boy, was the beg, or governor,

PRIME MINISTER OF BOKHARA.

SAYID ABDUL AHAD, EMIR OF BOKHARA.

of Kermineh, where the emir's country palace is located, and the situation was concealed for twelve hours until he could be brought to Bokhara. Under the protection of General Annenkoff, commander of the Russian forces, he was able to assume power without objection. The eldest brother, Melik, who had rebelled against his father and had fled to India, remained there until his death. Another older brother was continued as beg of Hissar for some time, but was afterwards accused of contemplating rebellion and was quietly "removed." A third brother was sent to prison upon some pretext and died within the walls.

Sayid Abdul Ahad was twenty-one years old when he became emir, and for twenty-five years he has done very little that is either good or bad, but has been a sort of gilded marionette in the hands of his Russian adviser. He has spent his time in indolence and luxury, with a good cook and a large harem, a well-supplied wine cellar at a country villa at Kermineh, seventy miles from Bokhara, at a winter villa at Yalta, the Russian Newport, on the coast of the Crimea, and at a country place a few miles from that delightful resort.*

The railway station of Bokhara was placed nine miles from that city and given a different name out of politeness to the emir, whose pride the Russian government and its agents endeavoured to protect in every possible way. His Highness, to all intents and purposes, is entirely independent, and the Russian agent at Kagan is instructed not to interfere with him in any manner unless it is necessary to maintain

* Sayid Abdul Ahad, emir of Bokhara, died on the 5th day of January, 1911, and was succeeded on the throne by his son, Sayid Mir Alim Khan.

the statu quo. He will not give permits to enter the ark, or citadel, in which the emir has his palace in Bokhara, for example, but gives his card with a few words of introduction and commendation to the officer in charge, which, of course, answers every purpose.

The relations between Russia and Bokhara are defined by two treaties concluded in 1868 and 1873 between General Kaufmann, commander-in-chief of the Russian forces, and the first victor of Turkestan,on behalf of the imperial government, and the late Emir Mozaffur-ed-din. These treaties place Bokhara in a position of qualified independence under the protection of the Russian government, but prohibit the emir from communicating with any other government except through the Russian agent, and surrenders the waterway of the Oxus and certain strategic positions to Russia. It is not only a safe but an economical arrangement, because Russia is relieved of the trouble and expense of maintaining the government and possesses every advantage, although the people are very restless and rebellion is imminent at any time. They realize that the inhabitants of Samarkand, Tashkend, and other neighbourhood khanates are a great deal better off under the broad, tolerant policy of Russia than they are under the non-progressive, narrow, and corrupt rule of the native khans.

The emir allows his begs to do pretty much as they please with their subjects, provided each of them supplies him with a stated amount of revenue. The system of taxation is very severe and exacts from the farmers at least one-third and often more of their crops and from other people a corresponding share of their incomes. The begs must collect enough taxes in addition to satisfy their own avarice

and maintain their local governments. They furnish so many soldiers to a useless army and equip them. It is a sort of a militia, which is to be called out when needed, and is organized under the direction of the Russian inspectors and drillmasters. The emir has a bodyguard composed of ruffians modelled after the Cossacks. They are the terror of the country because they can do no wrong. They rob and kill without interference, and so long as they do not strike the wrong man they are not even reprimanded.

The emir has a cabinet of seven or eight ministers, who have charge of the various branches of administration, and are assisted by many officials, great and small, usually poor relations and protegés, who have difficulty in finding anything to do. The actual head of the government, or prime minister, is called the kush-beg; the minister of finance is the divan-beg and the minister of the interior is the oölah-beg. The latter has immediate control of the local governments throughout the khanate, and is thus able to come more closely in touch with the population than any other minister. These are the only important officials, and they are under the supervision of a Russian resident called an "agent," who lives at Kagan, the railway station nine miles from the city of Bokhara, and keeps in the background as much as possible.

The palace of the emir, the residence of the prime minister, the offices of the various other departments of the government, the headquarters of the army, and the prison are located in the centre of the city of Bokhara and are protected by a high wall pierced by a single gate. This citadel is called the "Ark," the palace is called the "Khele-Sarai," and the throne of the emir is called the "Koktash."

The cities, villages, and towns are governed by an "ak-sakal" (literally, a graybeard), who corresponds to the elder of the Russian mir, or the mayor of our towns. He is elected by the people for a term of three years and has autocratic powers, so far as the beg will permit. Every fifty householders elect an ellik-bashi (literally, a head of fifty). They compose a board of aldermen or a common council, and perform similar functions to those bodies in the United States, subject always to the approval of the beg. Thus there is, at the bottom, a foundation of representative government, even among the Bokharoits.

The railway station of Bokhara is called Kagan, and is nine miles from the ancient city. It consists of a group of one-story buildings, fronting wide streets, which are not so well paved nor so well shaded as those of other Russian settlements in Turkestan. The residences, as in other Russian settlements, are protected by high walls surrounded by gardens and shaded with fine trees. In the centre of the town is a large parade ground upon which most of the shops and business houses are situated. There are several manufactories around the railway station, which have tall chimneys that shed a good deal of smoke. There is a little branch railway from Kagan to Bokhara, and there are four trains each way daily, which make the trip in about twenty minutes, but it is more interesting to go by carriage, a distance of nine miles and a two hours' drive. The landscape is not nearly so attractive as that around Samarkand. It seems lifeless and exhausted, and the villas are not so comfortable or prosperous looking. Perhaps the summer heat may have something to do with appearances, for the rays of the sun are so fierce that all nature seems to fear them.

The earth becomes so thirsty that wide cracks open in the soil, like chaps on the lips of a man in the desert. We were glad that we came so early, but we should have come earlier. I cannot recommend anyone to visit that country, because of certain embarrassments and difficulties imposed by the Russian police, but whoever insists upon facing them should go in March, and certainly not later than the middle of May.

Just beyond the railway station at Kagan is a large yellow building with numerous windows and balconies, cupolas and pinnacles. It is covered with wooden gingerbread work, and looks as if it were intended for exposition purposes. It resembles the pavilions that are often built on fair grounds. Such fantastic Oriental designs are considered attractive by some people. This particular building stands about 100 yards back from the highway, in the midst of large grounds, which are protected by a fine iron fence, in much better taste than the building. Splendid iron gates are mounted in a stately portal, but they are locked; the building is vacant, abandoned, and evidently left to decay. The paint has peeled off in places, several windows are broken, some of the cupolas have fallen in and herds of sheep are grazing in the grounds. This building was erected for some fanciful reason by the emir of Bokhara when the railway first came so that he might be near the Russian settlement and the station, but he did not occupy it long and it has been deserted for several years.

The fields on both sides of the highway are well cultivated and are open nearly all the way. You catch glimpses of several villas, surrounded by orchards and gardens, half hidden behind high walls, and two or three villages where the farmers live who till the ground. We passed an exten-

sive cemetery, with curious-looking tombstones, and several ruined habitations, whose mud walls are slowly crumbling away; and we met many travellers of various conditions of life in odd-looking vehicles, on their way from the city to the station or to their homes. Nearly every horseman carried a rifle across the pommel of his saddle, which is an evil omen, because such things are not used for ornament.

Finally we came to the gate of Bokhara and saw the high mud wall which has separated that city from the outer world for twenty centuries. Samarkand has had a checkered existence. Its population has been more than 1,000,000, some writers say 2,000,000, at different periods of its history; and it now has about 180,000. There have been several cities of the same name upon the same site, or in that immediate neighbourhood, and for several miles in every direction the earth is covered with ruins. But Bokhara has had no such experience. Its population has never been greater than now, and numbers about 200,000. The same walls have encircled it for one, or perhaps two, thousand years and the generations of men who have lived and laboured and died during those centuries have passed in and out through four gates, which still exist and serve the same purpose, protected by queer old towers with mud walls seven or eight feet thick.

The gates are guarded and the towers are garrisoned by fierce-looking soldiers, wearing a uniform similar to that of the Cossacks of the Don, and they are under the command of Cossack officers, detailed by the Russian governor-general of Turkestan. The towers look formidable, but modern artillery would knock them into smithereens in five minutes. The gates are monumental, made of enormous planks of

STREET LEADING TO THE GREAT GATE OF BOKHARA.

oak, covered with wrought-iron ornaments and studded with enormous nails. There isn't much ceremony when an ordinary tourist in a carriage wishes to pass, but a tax collector is always present to exact a farthing or two from every farmer who brings in a chicken or a dozen eggs or a basket of vegetables, and he cannot reach the market with his produce unless he pays. There are continuous lamentations because of this oppression, but the emir cannot hear them; he is too far away, and if he were in Bokhara his ears would be stuffed with troubles by the contractors who are collecting the revenues of the government for a commission.

"Bokhara the Noble" is a great disappointment. Sentimental readers of its romances should stay away. With the exception of the mosques and meddresses, it is nearly all mud, without a single attractive feature, and very different from Tashkend, Samarkand, Kokand, and other cities under Russian jurisdiction. The streets are shut in between high walls and the roadways have been worn down by the travel of ages until they have become troughs, which are growing deeper all the time, because the hoofs of animals and the sandals of men continue to wear out the soil, which pulverizes and blows away. Few of the houses have windows on the streets. They are all protected by thick dead walls, and are reached through gateways closed by solid doors. When the gates are open you often catch a glimpse of the interiors, but they are uninteresting, merely more mud buildings, with flat roofs thatched with straw, and a good deal of rubbish lying about. The family lives somewhere back in the courtyard, but the women are never visible; naked children play about in the dust; there are no gardens

or flowering plants or shrubbery, or similar decorations, which make other Turkestan cities so delightful, and the people have no inducement to sing "Home, Sweet Home."

Even the ruins are a disappointment. It is difficult to work up any enthusiasm over shapeless heaps of mud, no matter what their historical associations may have been. There is no marble, no stone work, no architecture except half-ruined mosques and meddresses of brick, which were formerly veneered with tiles. Even the palace of the emir, which has been the scene of untold misery, cruelty, and crime, is built of mud, and so are the official edifices which surround it. The only architectural effects Bokhara could ever boast of are the blue and white tiles that are stuck upon the walls to hide their ugliness, and the owners of the buildings that were so ornamented have evidently never attempted to keep them in repair, or to preserve them when they have commenced to decay.

The streets are always crooked, none are straight; and as all mud walls look alike, it's a good deal of a puzzle for a stranger to find his way through the labyrinth. The widest of them is scarcely wide enough to let two wagons pass, and the hubs of the wheels have ground deep grooves on both sides almost the entire length of every street throughout the city.

There are no parks or playgrounds, and nothing attractive or artistic or even picturesque. The only foliage to be seen is that of a few trees which overhang filthy, stagnant pools of water used for drinking, washing clothing, and for promiscuous bathing. You often see people bathing and washing their feet or their garments, and filling jugs and jars and buckets for drinking purposes at the same time.

The water is always covered by a yellowish green scum, and is alive with germs of loathsome diseases, including one which has attracted the interest of medical science throughout the world. A microbe called the "Reshta," or guinea-worm, often lodges somewhere in the veins and produces a worm two or three feet long, which has the appearance of a string of vermicelli. It must be removed entire with a knife, because if a particle is left, blood poisoning is sure to follow. The operation, which is usually performed by barbers, is not difficult or dangerous, but is fatal unless it is complete. The disease is very common in Bokhara. Indeed, it has been asserted that every fifth person is carrying one of these worms around with him, and they were described by Sir Anthony Jenkinson, of London, who visited Bokhara as an envoy from Queen Elizabeth three hundred years ago. It is believed that the disease could be eradicated if the people were furnished with a pure water supply and were prevented from drinking from these filthy pools.

There is a restaurant and hotel of rather a primitive sort, called the "Aim-Sarai," on the top of a house, or rather a combination of houses, kept by Mrs. Kibabidge, a Russian widow, who does her best to reach the unattainable. It isn't a bad place. It has several good rooms, but you would not choose it if more comfortable accommodations could be had. Its patrons are chiefly Russian and Jewish drummers, rug and fur buyers, who come here regularly as representatives of big houses in Moscow, Constantinople, Berlin, London, and Paris, to purchase Persian lamb-skins, carpets, and wool, and they do a very large business.

The Bokharoits are handsome men as a rule, dignified and graceful in their movements. They all wear beards,

and their dark Oriental features and flashing black eyes are intensified by their white turbans, and long robes of the most brilliant colours you can imagine. Every citizen is an animated rainbow and the greater variety of colours he can get in his coat the more attractive it is to him.

We didn't see much of the women. They never appear. Bokhara is one of the most fanatical Mohammedan towns in all the Islam world, and the seclusion of women is the first article in their creed. Hence a stranger never has an opportunity of seeing their wives and daughters, no matter how intimate he may become with his friends.

The children are especially attractive; they are always neatly dressed and always well cared for. You never see a child with dirty face or hands and the parents take a great deal of pride in dressing them. They wear little gowns of the same pattern and material as their fathers and imitate them in demeanour as well as in dress.

Bokhara and every other town in the khanate of Bokhara has its regular police, with a kur-bashi, or chief, who is responsible to the Russian commander of the gendarmes. They are dressed in military uniform and organized on a military basis and perform the ordinary police duties. In addition there are night watchmen, who go about the streets beating small drums in order that offenders may know where they are and keep out of their way. They are like the "Serenos" in the old-fashioned towns of Spain who strike the pavement with heavy iron-shod staves as they tramp their beats, so as to cause terror in the hearts of evil-doers. In Salamanca, Valladolid, and other ancient cities of Spain you can hear them crying in the night:

"Sereno! Sereno! It's midnight and all's well!" In

Bokhara the watchmen have a similar cry, a sort of prolonged wail, beginning at a high key and gradually going down the scale until it ends in a sort of low moan, but I could not get a translation of it.

When the gates of Bokhara are closed at sunset the keys are deposited with the chief of police and are called for by the captain of the guard at sunrise in the morning. When the latter is late, as is frequently the case, there is a crowd of clamouring market women and hucksters on the outside waiting for him, and as soon as the gates are open the collectors of taxes take their places and demand octroi on every article of produce that is brought in for sale.

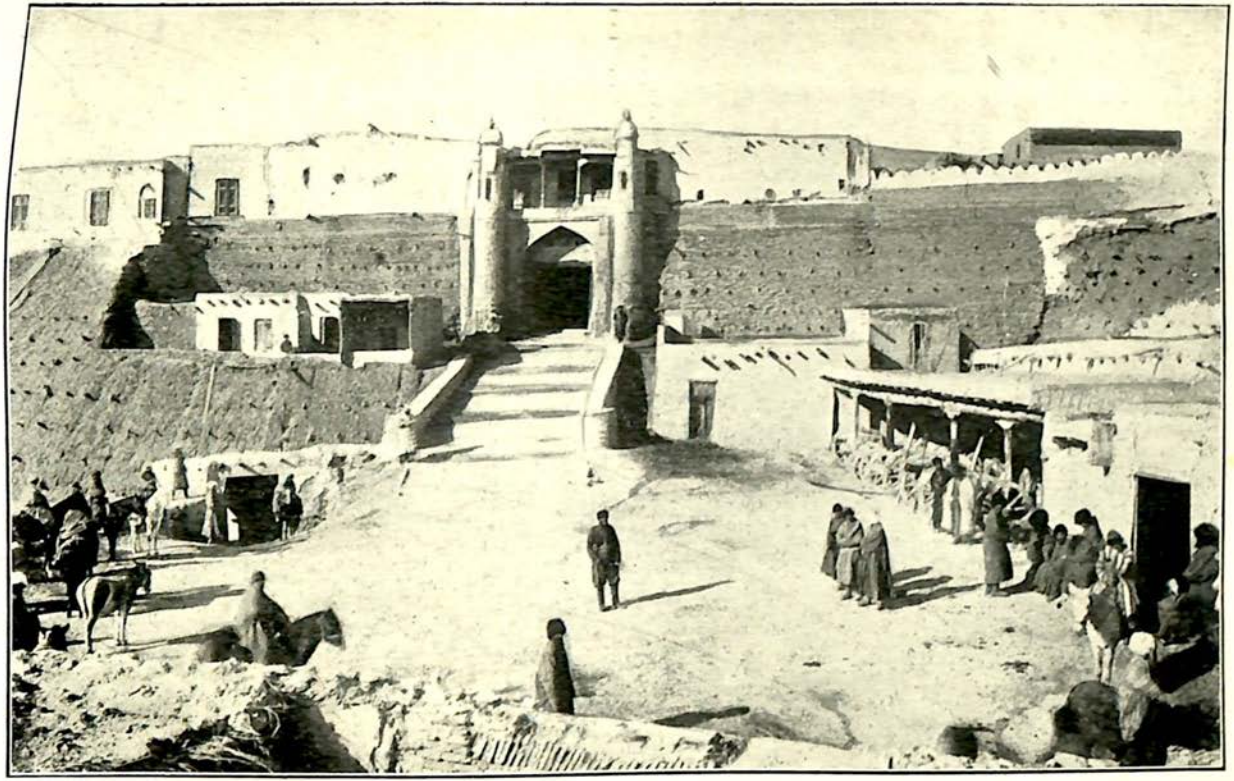
Bokhara is a very orderly place, however. There is no drunkenness, because the Koran prohibits the use of wine or liquors or alcohol of any kind, and the people are generally peaceful and orderly. Disorderly conduct is very rare and burglars are unknown. Turkestan is a prohibition country throughout, so far as the natives are concerned. Military officers, first and second class passengers on the railway, and other members of high society can obtain wines, brandy, vodka, and every other kind of drink at the clubs, railway restaurants, hotels, and other places, and drunkenness among that grade of people is common. Every day we were on the railroad the dining cars were crowded with army officers drinking around the tables from morning till night, and the mountain of bottles in the steward's closet gave an idea of the amount of liquor consumed. The lonesome life, the isolation, the absence of restraint, and the other causes and excuses for intemperance in far-off countries apply to Turkestan as they do to the Philippines and Alaska, but the natives are not allowed to have liquor.

The Russian government has treated its conquered tribes with a great deal more consideration for their health and moral welfare than the government of the United States has given to the Indians. The penalty for selling or giving liquor to a native is 500 rubles fine for the first offence, imprisonment for one year for the second offence, and for five years for each subsequent offence. The license to sell is forever forfeited on the first offence. This law is strictly enforced, and in that way the natives have been protected from a debasing vice which the Koran forbids.

Bokhara has been "dry" for more than four hundred years. Master Anthony Jenkinson, the envoy of Queen Elizabeth, in his account of his visit to Bokhara in the sixteenth century, says:

"It is forbidden at Boghar to drinke any other thing than water and mare's milke; and whosoever is found to breake the law is whipped and beaten most cruelly in the open markets. And there are officers appointed for the same who have authoritie to goe into any man's house to search if he have either aquavitae, wine or brage, and, finding the same, doe breake the vessels, spoil the drinke and punish the masters of the house most cruelly; yea, and many times if they perceive by the breath of a man that he hath drunken, without further examination he shall not escape punishment from their hands."

In the centre of the city, on the summit of an artificial mound about three hundred feet high and a mile or more in circumference, is a citadel called "the Ark," within which are the palace of the emir, the treasury, and other departments of the government and the prison. Similar enclosures are found in nearly all the Oriental capitals, like the "Forbidden



GATE-WAY TO THE ARK, HEADQUARTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BOKHARA.

City" of Peking and the Kremlin of Moscow, and they are intended for the protection of unpopular rulers against the wrath of their subjects. Most of them are needed.

The Ark of Bokhara was built in the twelfth century by Alp Arslan, a khan who reigned at that date near Khiva, and whose tomb was described in Chapter VI. The Ark is surrounded by a high, crenelated, mud wall, twenty feet thick, and has only one entrance, which is approached by a broad stairway from the righistan or market place, and is guarded by two round towers, pierced with rifle holes. On either side of the entrance are guardhouses occupied by soldiers, and within the gates, under the archway, is a platform where the kush-beg, or prime minister, sits as the vicar of his sovereign for two hours every morning to hear complaints and receive petitions from the people. This official can delegate the duty to one of his subordinates with the consent of his sovereign, but such an evasion would make him very unpopular and result in his downfall if it occurred often. Although it is a cruel, corrupt, and antiquated government, the public have a reverence for this ancient custom, which is common in the East, and they are not satisfied unless they have a hearing from the head of the administration. In the Old Testament we read about Daniel and other prime ministers "sitting in the gate of the king."

Over the gate to the Ark is a large clock that has a tragic history. It is the only modern thing about the place. In the early '40's a Russian nobleman living at Orenberg, Siberia, and the richest man in all that country, was in the habit of kidnapping men and women and selling them as slaves in Samarkand, Bokhara, Khiva, and other cities of

Turkestan. Among his victims was a wandering Italian named Giovanni Orlandi, of Parma, who made friends with his master, Nasrullah, at that time the emir of Bokhara, and the wickedest of all the khans for centuries. Nasrullah had a passion for mechanical work, and Orlandi, who was a clockmaker by trade, offered to build a large clock and place it over the gate of the Ark as the price of his liberty. The work was done in a most satisfactory manner and Orlandi became a free man, but the emir was not inclined to lose so valuable an attaché of his court and kept him busy upon various jobs. One day Orlandi made the mistake of getting drunk and offended the dignity of the emir by his familiarities. He was arrested, imprisoned, and condemned to death, but was offered a pardon if he would renounce the Roman Catholic religion and become a Mohammedan. This he stubbornly refused to do and Nasrullah put him to torture, but the Italian clung to his faith, even after the executioner had cut the skin around his throat from ear to ear, with a threat that the knife would go into the flesh in the morning if he did not recant. This did not move him and the next day he was beheaded.

Another Italian named Modesto Gavazzi visited Bokhara in 1863 for the purpose of buying silkworm eggs and was imprisoned for thirteen months, until he was released at the time of the Russian invasion.

No foreigner is allowed to enter the Ark without a permit, which can only be obtained through the influence of the Russian agent at Kagan, and he is not often willing to grant that privilege. Natives, however, come and go at pleasure, and there is a continuous stream of employes and visitors passing in and out of the gates. When we tried to enter

the guard stopped us by bringing his rifle to a horizontal position against our chests. After a brief parley he called the officer of the day, who was exceedingly courteous and explained the regulations he was required to enforce. He suggested that the only way we could procure a permit was through the Russian agent at Kagan, and feared we would not be able to obtain one because the Russians were always on the lookout against English spies. We explained that we were Americans, and he consented to refer the matter to the governor of the citadel, who proved to be an ancient Bokharoit, with a full, gray beard, a genial manner, and a pleasant face. He wore the customary dressing gown of silk in wide stripes of the most brilliant colours — green, yellow, red, and purple—a full, white turban, and a girdle of scarlet india mull.

He told us, as the captain of the guard had done, that all foreigners, especially English, were strictly forbidden to enter the Ark, and while he would like very much to make an exception in our case, as we were the first Americans he had ever met, he would undoubtedly be deprived of his rank and position if he disobeyed orders. He asked the privilege of retaining my card as a souvenir of the only American he had ever seen, and was polite enough to express a hope that our visit to Bokhara would be pleasant and profitable.

It is said that the chief reason why Englishmen are not permitted to enter the Ark is not so much the Russian fear of spies, but an apprehension on the part of the emir's government lest Great Britain should finally attempt to retaliate for his grandfather's treatment of Messrs. Stoddard and Connelly, two commissioners who were sent upon a

friendly mission to the khans of Central Asia in 1840 to promote trade. They visited Khiva, Merv, and other cities, where they were received with friendly courtesy, but Nasrullah, at that time the emir of Bokhara, and the same man who beheaded the Italian, threw them into a dungeon called the "Zindan," in which they were confined for several months and then beheaded.

The only European writer who ever saw this horrible place, where the prisoners were slowly devoured alive by sheepticks and other vermin, was a Russian named Khanioff. He says that there were two subterranean apartments, the Zindan-i-dala, or upper dungeon, and the Zindan-i-poin, or lower dungeon. The first is about forty feet square, entirely underground, without windows or other means of ventilation except the shaft through which the prisoners were lowered by ropes, and was used for culprits guilty of minor offences. The lower dungeon, beneath the upper, was a deep pit twenty-five or thirty feet square into which the prisoners were lowered by ropes from the upper dungeon and from which they seldom emerged. They were fed and given a scanty supply of water, but sooner or later were murdered by inches with the most excruciating agony by sheepticks and other vermin which were placed in the dungeon for that purpose. The Russian I have referred to says that when there were no prisoners to feed upon, the insects were fed on raw meat to keep up their appetites. These horrible places were closed and sealed by order of General Kauffman, the Russian viceroy.

The disappearance of Stoddard and Connelly was never officially explained. They were known to have reached Bokhara, and Connelly's brother received a letter written

at that place. This was the last heard from them, and, strange to say, the British government never made any official inquiry into their fate, which was unknown until Rev. Mr. Wolff, an American missionary now in Persia, managed to reach Bokhara several years after and obtained what he believed to be reliable information. He reported that after being confined in the lower dungeon for four months without change of raiment, and having half their flesh gnawed off their bones by vermin, they were taken out and beheaded in the market place by order of the emir, who was alarmed by a rumour that their government would send an expedition to rescue them.

It is an extraordinary fact that the British government has permitted this atrocious barbarity to remain unpunished. Nasrullah, grandfather of the present emir, came to the throne in 1826 upon the death of his brother, Husseim, who died very suddenly of poison. To prevent interference with his administration from the members of his family, Nasrullah had his three remaining brothers and thirty of his other relations put to death.

However, until the Russians took control of Turkestan the native rulers were always adverse to the presence of Europeans. The policy of exclusion was vigorously enforced by citizens as well as the officials, just as it is in Thibet and Afghanistan to-day. No foreigner is safe in either of those countries, and explorers who have entered them have been compelled to disguise themselves and endure much hardship and suffering. Fifty years ago it would not have been safe for any European to show his face in the bazaars of any city of Central Asia.

In addition to heavy wooden doors, which are always

closed and barred at nightfall, and sentinels on watch in the towers, an enormous chain, with links of iron as thick as your wrist, is stretched across the approach to the citadel and secured with a curious old padlock about as large as a ham. It reminds me of the chain that was stretched across the Hudson River during the Revolution of the American colonists, to prevent the British fleet from passing West Point.

Of course it was a great disappointment not to be able to see the interior of the citadel, but we were consoled by an assurance that we didn't miss anything. The emir has not lived in his palace for two years because he is afraid of a revolution, and remains at his country seat thirty miles from the city or at Yalta in the Crimea. The palace of the emir is occupied by retainers and poor relatives.

Outside the gate of the Ark is an arsenal and a large barracks for the regular army. They contain a collection of antiquated cannon and other arms of the greatest value to a museum, but they would not be of the slightest use in war. We saw hundreds of old-fashioned cast-iron cannon twelve and fifteen feet long, mounted upon carriages with wheels eight feet in diameter, which have been handed down for several generations, but when we approached them the sentinels on duty warned us away, and the officer of the guard would not permit us to go farther than the courtyard of the arsenal. That, however, was a most agreeable place to rest, because it was cool and quiet, while outside the sun was pouring its fierce rays upon a clamouring multitude, and trains of camels and donkeys continually passing through the righistan kept the air filled with dust.

Within the entrance to the arsenal sat a fortune teller,

THE MEDRESSE OF SHIR-DAR (THE LION BEARER) FRONTING THE CELEBRATED SQUARE AT SAMARKAND.

who seemed to be doing a good business, and several professional letter writers squatted like Turks, with their legs crossed, before low tables upon which their stationery and writing materials were spread. Their clients sat beside them, dictating the text of letters or contracts which they desired drawn. These writers, who perform the functions of notaries as well as amanuenses, are found in every mosque and market place throughout the East. When traders have reached a bargain they go at once to the nearest public writer and have the terms recorded. Contracts and agreements, bills of sale, receipts, and other commercial documents are drawn up the same way because business men throughout the Eastern countries are seldom able to write more than their own names.

The first Englishman who visited Bokhara was Master Anthony Jenkinson, who went as an ambassador from Queen Elizabeth in 1558 to open up trade with the people of Turkestan in the interest of the Muscovy Company. He remained two months and a half and was treated with much consideration. His report was published by the Hakluyt Society of London from the original manuscript several years ago, and is exceedingly interesting as a narrative of adventure and a description of the magnificence of the courts of Bokhara and Samarkand. From that date until 1841 no European was permitted in the country, and those who came in defiance of the prohibition suffered the penalty of death.

The first modern book on Turkestan was written by a Hungarian named Vambery, who went into Bokhara in 1863 in the garb of a mendicant dervish. Eugene Schuyler of the American embassy in St. Petersburg passed several

months there under the protection of the Russians in 1873 and wrote a book entitled "Turkestan" which is the highest authority. Since then, however, there has been no danger to visitors except from religious fanatics, who are apt to take offence at any lack of reverence or any intrusion upon sacred precincts, but the Russian military authorities, who control the railroad and have autocratic powers, do not encourage the presence of tourists, and prohibit commercial travellers from any country but their own. There are political rivalries and conspiracies and agitations in Bokhara as well as in Turkey and Ireland and the United States. There are rival parties and active partisans, a craving for liberty and for emancipation from the political restrictions and the tyrannical authority of the emir, who is an autocrat. There are no newspapers in Bokhara, a city of 200,000 inhabitants, nor in the province, with a population of nearly a million and a half of souls. The administration is as autocratic as that of Morocco or Abyssinia, but the recent political transformation of Turkey and Persia inspired a movement for a similar purpose among the educated and thinking element of an enslaved people.

The germ of liberty was dropped in Bokhara from Turkey and Persia and infected the public to such an extent that several secret societies have been formed to carry on a propaganda that is active, energetic, and influential, and which the kushbeg has not been able to suppress. As fast as he discovers and disbands one political society a dozen others spring up in its place, and matters are rapidly approaching a crisis which may perhaps cause a thorough reformation in the government there. Unfortunately the province is entirely surrounded by Russian Turkestan, and although it can

THE KEEPER OF THE ARK AT BOKHARA.

SAYID MIR ALIM KHAN, CROWN PRINCE OF BOKHARA, BORN JANUARY 3rd, 1880.

boast of a nominal independence, the great white czar holds the only key that can unlock the future of Bokhara politics. He alone will determine the form of government which will prevail hereafter.

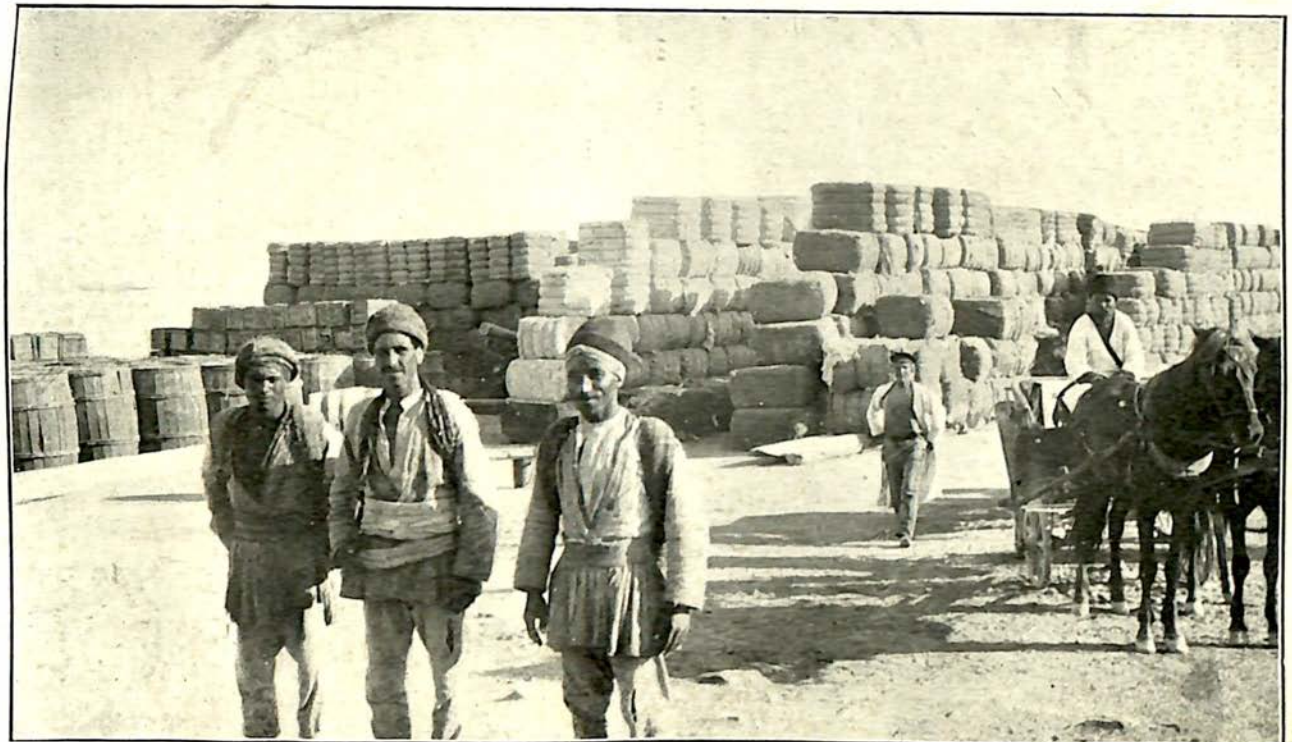
In August, 1909, delegations from the political secret societies notified the emir that his prime minister, or kush-beg, must go. They submitted a list of charges against him, with evidence to prove them. The emir promised to comply with their demand, but asked for time on the ground that the affairs of the khanate were so complicated that he could not make a sudden change in the administration. When the time was up, in February, 1910, the same prime minister remained in power, having, in the meantime, strengthened himself in some respects, and weakened his authority in others, by arresting and putting to death several of the most active agitators and throwing others into prison.

A demonstration was provoked on Febuary 24, 1910, by the arrest of several more suspects, whose friends attempted to rescue them and, having failed, attacked the residence of the prime minister, smashing the windows, defacing it with filth, and manifesting their hostility in other ways. The troops were called out and fired into the mob. About sixty citizens were killed and several hundred were wounded. The emir was so badly frightened that he relieved the offensive prime minister, and let him down easy by sending him on a mission to St. Petersburg, where he is expected to secure the approval and support of the Russian government for drastic measures to exterminate the advocates of a more liberal government and strengthen the hands of the present administration.

The riot was declared to be a religious demonstration in order to deceive people outside the city and the public generally. The two sects of Mohammedans there, as in Persia, Arabia, and other parts of Islam, are very bitter in their hostility. Frequent collisions occur between them. The late prime minister was a Persian by birth and a conspicuous member of the Shiite sect. His partisanship caused him to fill most of the offices with his fellow believers. All of the members of the emir's cabinet are Shiites. Most of the agitators and the leaders in the political societies are Sunnites, and there is undoubtedly a good deal of sectarian feeling mixed up in the liberal movement. Nearly all of the men who were killed by the soldiers in the riots were Sunnites, and that circumstance furnishes a justification for the claim that the demonstration was religious rather than political. The new prime minister is also a member of the Shiite sect, which continues in control of the government, and the leaders of the opposition continue to be Sunnites.

A few weeks after the riots the secret societies formulated other petitions which were submitted to the emir and have much greater significance than the first. They demanded a constitution, a legislature, a free press, freedom of speech, and the privilege of electing by ballot municipal and provincial officials. They submitted the form of a constitution similar to that of Turkey and gave the emir six months more to answer and act. When the time was up, nothing was done; but the spirit of freedom is growing.

The emir, whose name is Sayid Abdul Ahad, is an easy-going, luxurious, and lazy Oriental, who has all the vices and virtues of his predecessors on the throne. He is a glutton,



TURKESTAN COTTON AWAITING SHIPMENT AT KROSNOVODSK.

indulges himself in every form of intemperance and extravagance, and requires his subordinates to extort a sufficient amount of money from the people to pay his bills. He has practically nothing to do with his government. He farms out the taxes, and so long as his purse is filled does not inquire into the measures that have been taken to raise the money. He has lost a good deal of his prestige by submitting to the Russian invaders. His person is no longer considered sacred, as that of the Emperor of China used to be. His subjects have discovered that he is only a human being, made of very ordinary clay. Formerly, when he graciously granted an audience, it was customary for the master of ceremonies to seize the person to be presented, and drag him violently to the foot of the throne. This comedy was intended to flatter the emir into the delusion that everybody who approached him was overcome with awe and fright by his majestic appearance. But since the Russian conquest, this and every other pretense of the sort has been abandoned.

The crown prince is Sayid Mir Alim Khan, said to be an improvement upon his father in some respects, because he has had the advantage of European travel and observation. He has spent several months in St. Petersburg on several occasions, has met many Europeans during his winter visits at Yalta, speaks French fluently, and is quite familiar with modern civilization. This knowledge and experience has broadened his mind and increased his intelligence, but has not improved his habits. He is said to be very dissipated and even more extravagant than his father.

There is a division of opinion among the agitators. Both want to get rid of the emir. The radicals want an inde-

pendent liberal monarchy. The conservatives, who have the common sense to realize the difficulties of the situation, advocate annexation to Russia. They have seen the advantage of such a connection at Samarkand and Tashkand. When a change is made that will happen. There will be no constitution and no parliament.

CHAPTER IX

"THE PRIDE OF THE MOHAMMEDAN WORLD"

THERE is little doubt that Bokhara is one of the most ancient cities in the East. It had a place in history long before the Christian era and for 2,000 years has been enriched and despoiled in turn by the conquerors of Asia. It has been a pillar of Islam, the capital of some of the greatest kings of the East, and its universities and schools have been the pride of the Mohammedan world. Their faculties have consisted of the most learned mullahs and have drawn scholars there to study and to discourse. Bokhara has been the object of pilgrimages from every country in the East, and there is a proverb which describes the veneration in which this city was formerly held:

"In all other parts of the world light descends upon the earth; from old Bokhara it ascends."

The wealth and commerce of Bokhara have equalled in fame its piety and learning. Its silks were the most delicate, expensive, and beautiful in design in all Asia; its carpets and brocades have been unrivalled; and even to-day its rugs rank next to the finest of Persia. The products of China and India and Europe changed hands in its khans and its merchants were among the richest and most influential in all the world.

Alexander the Great occupied Bokhara for several months, and reigned there afterwards in the person of one of his

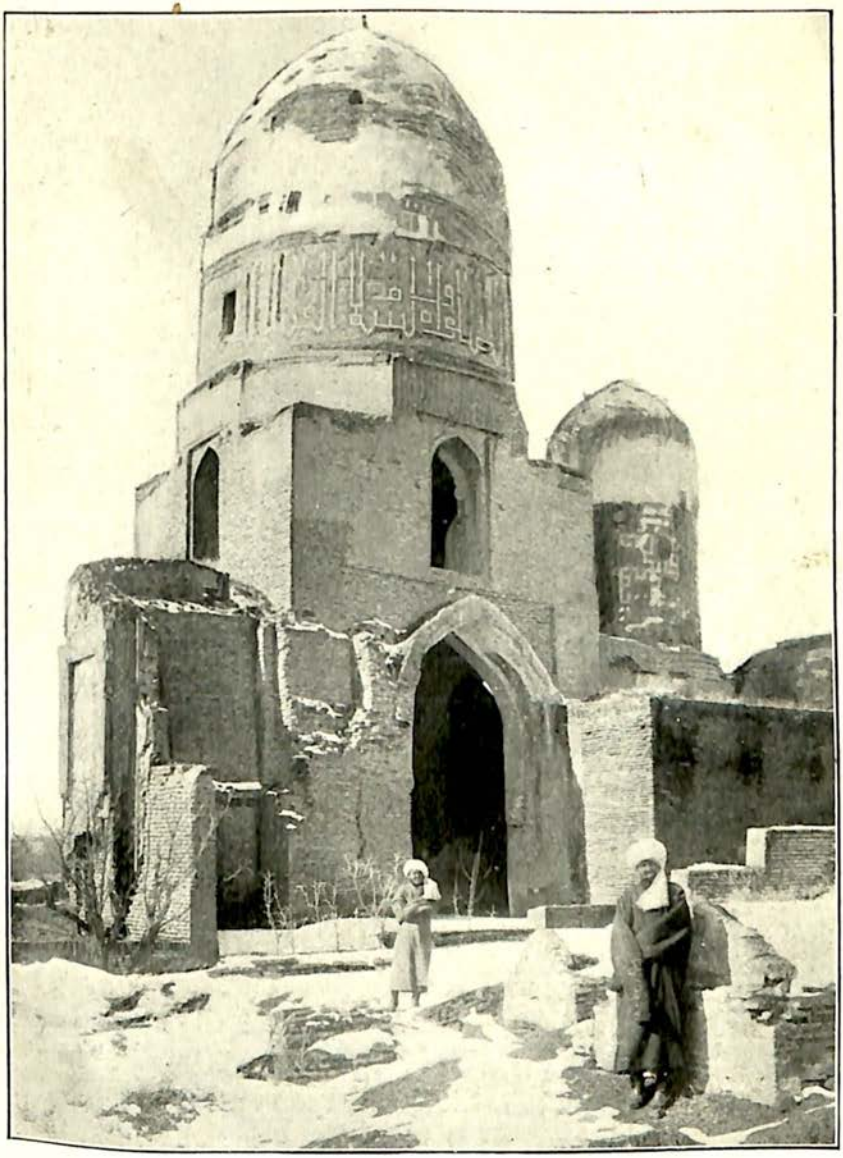
trusted lieutenants. Quintus Curtius tells us that here he overcame a lion in single combat, at which the envoy from Sparta exclaimed:

"Well done, Alexander; nobly hast thou won the prize of kingship from the king of beasts."

The same authority tells us that Alexander sacrificed 4,000 animals to the gods upon his return from India, and it was here that he killed his old friend and comrade, Clytus, in a drunken passion.

The exploits of the great Macedonsky, as the Russian writers refer to him, are quite as familiar to the people as those of Tamerlane, and several prominent families claim descent from him. He did little for Samarkand or for Bokhara himself, but the governments he organized there existed for three hundred years, until a short time before the Christian era, and introduced a considerable degree of Greek culture, of which, unfortunately, no traces remain. The only tangible evidences of the presence of the world conqueror in those parts are the remains of a few mud walls and a few coins bearing his bust, which are occasionally discovered in the ruins around Samarkand. That city was also the headquarters of Alexander for several months and he fortified it.

For more than a thousand years Bokhara was ranked next to Mecca as the most influential educational and ecclesiastical centre in the Mohammedan world. It was famous for the number and the grandeur of its mosques, the scholarship of its meddresses — which are divinity schools — the piety of its priests, and for the fanaticism and intolerance of the people. The learning and fame of the faculties who taught in its schools attracted scholars



A MOSQUE IN BOKHARA.

and students from India, Arabia, Persia, Egypt, Afghanistan, Morocco, and other countries of Islam; and its meddresses were the scenes of frequent theological controversies between the rival sects. It was the headquarters of the principal Moslem religious orders; its streets were thronged with monks and other zealots, and it is still the home of a colony of dervishes who claim to have direct descent from Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, and they call him the first dervish. They wear long hair and beards and live lives of celibacy. Their costume is a long cloak of camels' hair of light brown colour, with a high cap of the same material, shaped like a sugar cone. There are two classes of dervishes. The more intellectual and intelligent are supposed to be engaged in profound theological study and meditation, while another class, under the direction of their sheikh, are sent out through the country to beg at the doors of the houses and in the bazaars, and to stand at the street corners and pray that Allah will shower blessings upon those who give them alms. Each of these beggars carries a money box, usually made from a gourd, and a staff with an iron ring attached to the end, which is rattled to attract attention.

There are said to have been 197 mosques and 167 meddresses or Mohammedan colleges in Bokhara, but this number has been reduced more than one-half by decay and dilapidation. Those which still exist are very badly out of repair and have had the beautiful Persian tiles, inscribed with texts from the Koran in blue and white characters, torn from their walls by vandals and the weather. Everything about them is in a pitiable state. Nothing is whole or perfect, and the famous buildings which gave the city the name of "Bokhara the Noble," are now falling

into ruins without any attempt on the part of the priests, the people, or the government to preserve them.

The most famous mosque in the city is called Masjid Baliand, or Kalian, and when it was first built it was one of the grandest temples in Asia. It can accommodate 10,000 worshippers. It dates back to the tenth century; was restored by Timour the Tartar in the early part of the fifteenth, and up to the present generation has been attended by the emir every Friday with great ceremony; but it is now crumbling to pieces and there is no hand to stay its fate. Its dome is covered with azure tiles, which are gradually falling off, leaving conspicuous scars. The condition of these buildings is typical of the religious life and the morals of the people.

In 1219 Genghis Khan rode an Arabian stallion into this mosque, and when the mullahs expostulated with him for the profanation he threw himself from the saddle, climbed into the pulpit, cast the Koran on the floor, and shouted to his soldiers:

"The hay is cut, give your horses fodder!" which was the signal for his savage horde to begin a wholesale massacre and to loot the city of its boasted wealth.

The great central court is enclosed by vaulted cloisters of brick. Heavy arches support the upper stories and the ponderous roof. The façade, which is in very bad repair, and is rapidly losing its veneer of porcelain tiles, which were once of great beauty, is one of the finest in Asia. In some respects it is thought to surpass those at Samarkand, but that can scarcely be possible. It is a matter of taste, however. There is no standard or rule by which comparisons may be made.

The interior of the Masjid Baliand mosque was formerly lined with tiles throughout, and they were ornamented with geometric figures, but they are nearly all gone except those in the high places and the dark corners, where the weather cannot affect them and the hands of vandals cannot reach them. They are of the same material and pattern as those at Ṣamarkand, and it is believed that this mosque was built by Tamerlane upon the ruins of another, and restored by Abdullah Khan in the sixteenth century. The style of architecture is identical with other buildings erected by the great Tartar.

An inner court is surrounded by cloisters and cells, which are occupied by 250 mullahs and students. Some of the cells are fitted up in comfort and even luxury. Others are decorated with considerable taste. The mullahs attached to this mosque have a high reputation for scholarship and ability, as well as for fanaticism and intolerance. The emir formerly went there to pray every Friday when he lived in Bokhara, with a ceremony similar to that of the Selamlik of the Turkish sultan at Constantinople.

Another important meddresse is called Irnazar-Eltchi, in honour of an ambassador sent by the emir of Bokhara to Catherine the Great at Petersburg. The story goes that the empress, who was notorious for her amours, fell in love with the handsome Oriental envoy, and enjoyed a prolonged liaison with him. Upon his departure from the Russian capital she presented him with a purse containing fifty thousand gold rubles and, evidently repenting of his sin, he used the money to found this institution for the education of Tartars and other Russian Mussulmans.

It would require a large book to contain an account of all

the mosques and meddresses, but they are generally alike in architecture and arrangement, as they are in purpose. Each has a dome of splendid proportions, either painted blue and dotted with golden stars, or green, which is the sacred colour of Moslems, or is covered with tiles which glisten in the sun. The storks have built nests in the cozy corners on all the roofs and on the tops and the balconies of the minarets.

The storks are regarded as sacred in Bokhara and therefore are very tame. They come into the market place to pick up garbage, and the peasants treat them almost with reverence. Anyone who should injure a stork would be roughly treated, and, indeed, one has to be exceedingly discreet in his conduct here because of the hatred of foreigners, especially Europeans and Christians.

The spirit of fanaticism is not so intense as it was before the Russians came. People are now accustomed to seeing foreigners in the streets, and many of their prejudices have dissolved under the magnetic influence of foreign money, but Bokhara is, perhaps, the most intolerant community outside of Thibet. The Jews have always been kindly treated, and Hindu Brahmins are now safe. There is a large colony of them selling tea, buying skins, and engaged in other business.

The largest seminary in Bokhara, and one of the largest in Asia, is called Miri Arab and stands on the other side of a plaza from the great mosque. Its cloisters contain 114 cells and are occupied by 230 mullahs (priests) and softas (students). It was originally a beautiful building and has been often mentioned as exhibiting in its structural detail the best designs and decorative work in Central Asia, but, like everything else, it is going to pieces.

Between the Masjid Baliand and the Miri Arab stands a lofty tower, 212 feet high and 42 feet in diameter at the base, built in the tenth century. The material is ordinary gray bricks, which are stamped with decorative patterns and laid in belts, some twenty and others fifteen and ten feet wide. At the summit is an open gallery from which criminals formerly were thrown headlong upon the pavement below; but of late years this penalty is inflicted only upon counterfeiters, matricides, and persons guilty of treason to the government. Such executions are announced by public criers, and are witnessed by enormous crowds. The sentence is read by a herald and the culprit is then hurled from the platform between two of the arches and falls a crushed and bleeding mass upon the paving stones at the base of the tower. There have been no such spectacles for three years, the Russian adviser to the government having suggested to the emir that they give his government a bad reputation.

The tower is called the Minari Baliand, which means the minaret of the mosque Baliand.

There is, of course, a stork's nest on the top of the tower — more than one I should judge — and near the base is a large pool of putrid yellow water, with eight steps leading down to it. It is surrounded by shops for the sale of meat and groceries, two barbers have their chairs on the pavement outside, and peddlers of sweetmeats, cakes, and other forms of food are numerous.

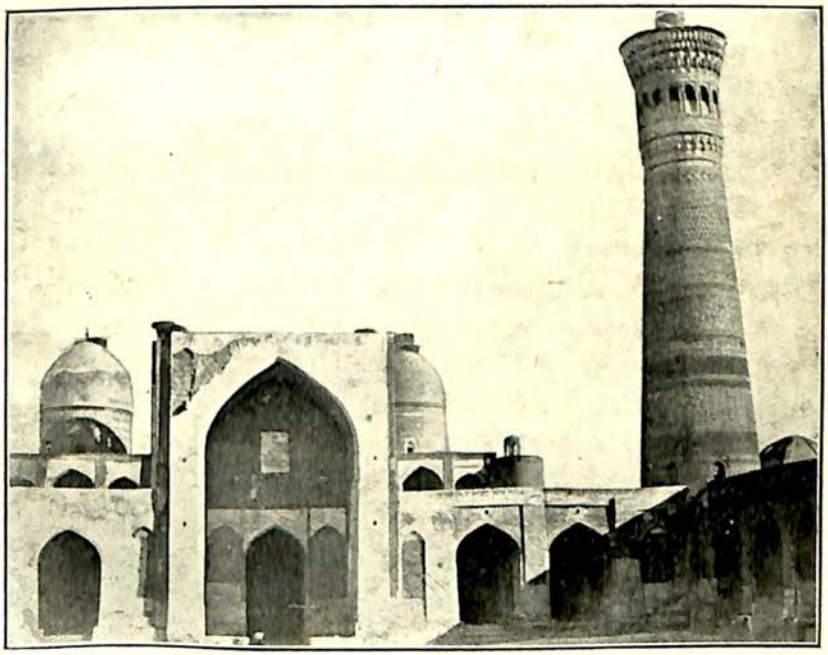
On the other side of the tower, in a low building, is a maktab, or primary school, to which we were drawn by the murmur of children's voices. In Eastern schools pupils always study aloud and create a babel of voices. This is permitted on the theory that the human mind absorbs

information through the ears better than through the eyes, and you are continually reminded of it by hearing people read aloud from newspapers, books, and other printed or written documents. If an Oriental looks at a railway time-table he reads it aloud; and he will tell you that he could not understand it unless he did so. Hence, at the primary schools, where this habit is acquired, you can hear the little ones shouting their A B C's, older classes repeating extracts from the Koran and reciting to themselves whatever lessons have been assigned to them — all in loud tones. It is difficult to understand how they can learn anything in the confusion.

As we entered the maktab the boys, who were squatting on the floor, began to yell out their lessons louder than ever, evidently for the purpose of convincing us of their diligence. They were bright little fellows, with keen eyes and regular features, clean faces and hands, and neatly dressed in gorgeous colours. Every one wore an embroidered skull cap upon his head. I don't remember having ever seen a more intelligent or attractive lot of youngsters. The teacher, who wore a green turban, indicating his descent from Mahomet, was a fine looking man and greeted us cordially, but we did not stop.

The books from which the children were studying are printed in Russia, except the Koran, which is printed here. The boys are first taught the alphabet and when they are able to read and write they are required to copy extracts from the Koran, which are committed to memory. Then, when they have completed that task, they are given other books, usually of a religious nature, which are also committed to memory. There are very little mathematics except the use of the counting machine used by all Orientals.

A POTTERY MERCHANT IN THE BAZAARS.



MOSQUE OF MUSFID KALIAN AND THE MINAR KALIAN, BOKHARA.

History and geography are seldom taught. The school sessions begin after the call to prayer at 7 o'clock in the morning and continue until the call to evening prayer at 5 o'clock, with an hour recess at midday for luncheon, which is usually limited to a piece of bread, an onion, or a little fruit. The school week begins Saturday morning and ends Thursday night, Friday being the Sabbath, or day of rest and worship among the Mohammedans. The schoolmaster does not receive a regular salary, but is paid by the parents of the pupils, according to their means, and on his birthday and other anniversaries he expects presents.

You have doubtless read a good deal about the piety and virtues of the Moslems and the good example that they furnish for the Christian world to imitate. You have doubtless read, too, about the wisdom of the teachings of the Koran and its beneficial influence upon the human race, much of which is possible, because all maxims of virtue and honour are of value, provided they are practised. I knew an old lady once who used to say that religion is a good thing if it is lived up to, but a bad thing if it isn't — and there is a sermon on hypocrisy in that quaint epigram.

There is no doubt that the Mohammedans have many virtues, and one of the most noticeable is the diligence with which they attend to their religious duties and the fervency and regularity of their prayers. They are a very temperate people, too. A drunken Mohammedan is as rare as a white blackbird, although some of the most pious followers of the Prophet permit themselves to fall from grace occasionally. I once had a dragoman in India who was a very devout Mussulman and never neglected to say his prayers when the hour was called by the muezzins in the minarets.

Sometimes his conscientiousness was a little inconvenient, but we never complained; yet the injunctions of the Koran did not prevent him from drinking wine or beer when it was offered to him. I asked him about it one day as he sat with an empty stein before him:

"I was under the impression that your religion forbade you to drink wine?"

"It does, my master," he answered, "but Allah is merciful."

It is amusing to watch the application of the rules of life as laid down in the Koran, and the laws of the shariat, the Mussulman code of practice, which is based upon them. The original legislation of Mahomet was made for the Arabs of the desert. Hence there is quite as much difficulty in applying it to civilized communities as there would be in the application of the Mosaic code to the administration of the United States government at Washington, or the transaction of mercantile business in Chicago or New York. The provisions of the Koran and the shariat concerning trade are too limited to suit modern methods of doing business. For example, it is prohibited to purchase or sell articles which are not in existence; speculation of all kinds is forbidden; it is not lawful, under the letter as well as the spirit of the Koran, to accept a profit on the barter or exchange of articles of value, or to collect interest on loans. These restrictions are successfully evaded by the business men of Bokhara and other Mohammedan cities, just as the business men of the United States skate around the outside of the moral law. Were the precepts of the Holy Scriptures applied to the every-day habits and transactions in life of Christian communities, as we expect the commandments of the Koran to be obeyed by the Moslems, civilization would be

impossible, and, so far as the practice of what we preach is concerned, the adherents of all religions are in the same boat.

It is, nevertheless, amusing to see the ingenuity by which the pious Mussulman evades the rules of his religion to accomplish what the late Thomas B. Reed said was the just ambition of every citizen of the State of Maine—"to get 7 per cent on his money, and 10 per cent if possible."

The chief money lenders and bankers of Turkestan are Jews. There are a few Armenians in the business also, but they are exceedingly unpopular because of a general impression that all Armenians are English spies. This is based upon the fact that Great Britain has endeavoured to protect the Armenian people from the persecution of the Turks. There are some Afghan and Hindu bankers also, and occasionally a native Bokharoit goes into that business. There are more natives engaged in banking and money lending in the Russian provinces of Khiva, Merv, Samarkand, Kokand, and Tashkend than in Bokhara, however. The more a community becomes civilized the less scrupulous are the Moslems in the observance of the teachings of the Koran.

Each community has its peculiar methods of evading the injunction against collecting interest on money loaned, and among Mussulman capitalists throughout Turkestan 4 per cent a month is not considered excessive. The mullahs, or priests, do not condemn the practice, but encourage it by teaching the principle that lending money to the poor is giving to the Lord, and that all worthy actions are entitled to a just reward.

The various methods of collecting interest are called "paths," and we hear of "Bokhara paths," "Khiva paths" "Tashkend paths" and others. The "Bokhara path"

is an arrangement under which a man who borrows money sells the lender some article of nominal value — a ring or a watch or a whip — and agrees to buy it back within three months or six months at an advance over and above the purchase price, equivalent to the interest at a given rate for the interval.

The "Tashkend path" is for the borrower to buy of the lender a piece of property and agree to pay him a certain amount on a certain date, provided he is allowed the use of the funds in the meantime.

As some good Christians often make light of their own sins, so do pious Mussulmans joke each other concerning the evasion of the Commandments of their Holy Scriptures, and there are numerous stories more or less apropos. For example:

When a Mussulman money lender died and went to the gates of paradise, Satan grabbed him by the arm and rushed him down a steep and rocky path into a very hot furnace room, where he could see the blazes through the cracks. Satan jammed him roughly into an iron cage, and, calling his stokers, opened the furnace door and ordered them to cast him into the flames. The poor sinner remonstrated piteously and begged for mercy. Inquiring the reason for his punishment, he was informed that it was the penalty for collecting interest upon the money he had loaned.

"But I did not collect interest," he cried. "I only sold my horse at an advance."

"That's true," said Satan, "and I'm not going to burn you; I'm only going to heat the irons of this cage."

One of the most interesting of the legends of the Bokharoits concerns the origin of silk, which came from the patience

and piety of the prophet Job, under the following circumstances:

God said to His archangel Gabriel: "Take all the riches from this man."

The archangel came down from heaven with a hundred thousand angels, and took away everything that Job possessed; and Job increased his prayers ten times in order that he might show his gratitude for the goodness of God in relieving him from the responsibility. And then God said to Satan:

"Oh, cursed one, thou hast seen that I have taken away all his wealth, and yet he praiseth my goodness!"

Satan answered: "Send disease into his body and he will curse thee." And the body of Job was covered with worms. Still he lifted up his spirit in praise and thanksgiving.

After some days the worms increased until it seemed as if they would eat up his whole body. There was not one spot upon him that was not covered with sores. He was so weak that when a worm fell off he begged his wife to pick it up and place it back again in the wound, saying: "If God has ordered me to feed worms with my body it would be sinful to deprive them of their food." And the wife of the prophet fulfilled his command and placed the worms back upon the body of her husband, and Job did not cease his thanksgiving and his praises of the goodness of God.

Then God commanded Gabriel to obtain water, and where the archangel smote the earth with his wings there opened a living fountain. By command of God the prophet threw himself into the spring, and in that moment was made whole. The worms fell from him, the sores were healed, his flesh became smooth and sound, and his person was as perfect as

it was on the day he was born, like the person of an angel.

The fountain remained and was called "The Sea of Life," and all believers who bathe in it become perfect in body and soul. The worms which were in the body of Job swam out of the water, crept up into a mulberry tree, and began to eat of its leaves. To conceal themselves from Job they knitted coverings and shut themselves up in them and went to sleep until their sins should be forgotten, and the coverings which they knitted for themselves are called cocoons.

There is only one hospital in Bokhara and that is in very poor condition. It is supposed to be sustained by the emir, but he gives very little money to it and that grudgingly. There are no native doctors in the country; the study of medical science is absolutely unknown. A man who was employed as cook at the hospital for three months is now a prominent practitioner in Bokhara, and has patients among the wealthiest classes of the people. He learned the trade during his brief stay in the kitchen of the hospital, and the people seem to have confidence in him. His practice is becoming so lucrative that competition has commenced, and two barbers who have done surgical work for several years have dropped their razors and lather brushes, and have hung out signs as physicians.

In the Russian settlements throughout Turkestan are numerous hospitals of the most modern type, managed by military surgeons and hospital stewards, and attended by trained nurses. There are also private practitioners from the Russian medical schools, free public hospitals to which the natives are admitted upon application, and public dispensaries where patients are treated daily without charge.

The government does not encourage foreign physicians to practise in the native cities, and does not permit them to settle there. If a native desires modern medical treatment, he can go to the office of a physician in the Russian settlement, or he can send for a Russian physician to attend him at his own house, but, according to the general policy of non-interference in native affairs, natives are not instructed in the advantages of modern medicine and surgery any more than in the Russian religion.

In Bokhara, until a few years ago, there was an officer of the law known as the Reis-i-Shariat, a sort of general inspector of public morals, who went about the city every morning in his official robes, with a heavy whip in his hand, among the mosques, bazaars, and other places where the men of the town intermingled, to administer justice and to uphold righteousness. If he saw anything wrong, he ordered it repaired. If improvements were suggested, he ordered them made. He heard complaints from the neighbours, and if a case was not satisfactorily explained he administered the punishment according to his judgment, with his own hands, upon the spot. He had universal jurisdiction and arbitrary powers over the manners and the morals of the people and no one but the emir and the prime minister had the power to interfere with him.

The most notable ruin in the vicinity of Bokhara is the mosque of Hodja Akhrar, a Mohammedan saint, who was not only celebrated for his piety, but for his wealth, and became the head of one of the most influential religious orders in Islam. It is said that when he was making his pilgrimage to Mecca he cured the Khalif of Bagdad of a terrible disease, and the latter, as compensation, asked him to select anything

he preferred among all the possessions in the royal treasury. Akhrar selected a manuscript copy of the Koran, written in Cufic characters upon parchment by the great Othman, the third in succession from Mohammed. The khalif was very much chagrined to lose his greatest treasure, but his promise was sacred, and the Hodja brought the manuscript to Bokhara and afterwards to Samarkand and Tashkend, where he died. After his death the manuscript remained in a mosque at Bokhara until the Russian invasion, when the mullahs sold it to a Russian officer for 125 rubles and it is now in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg.

Hodja Akhrar is buried in the mosque that bears his name, and it was one of the finest buildings in Asia, but no attempt was ever made to protect or preserve it.

CHAPTER X

THE BAZAARS OF BOKHARA

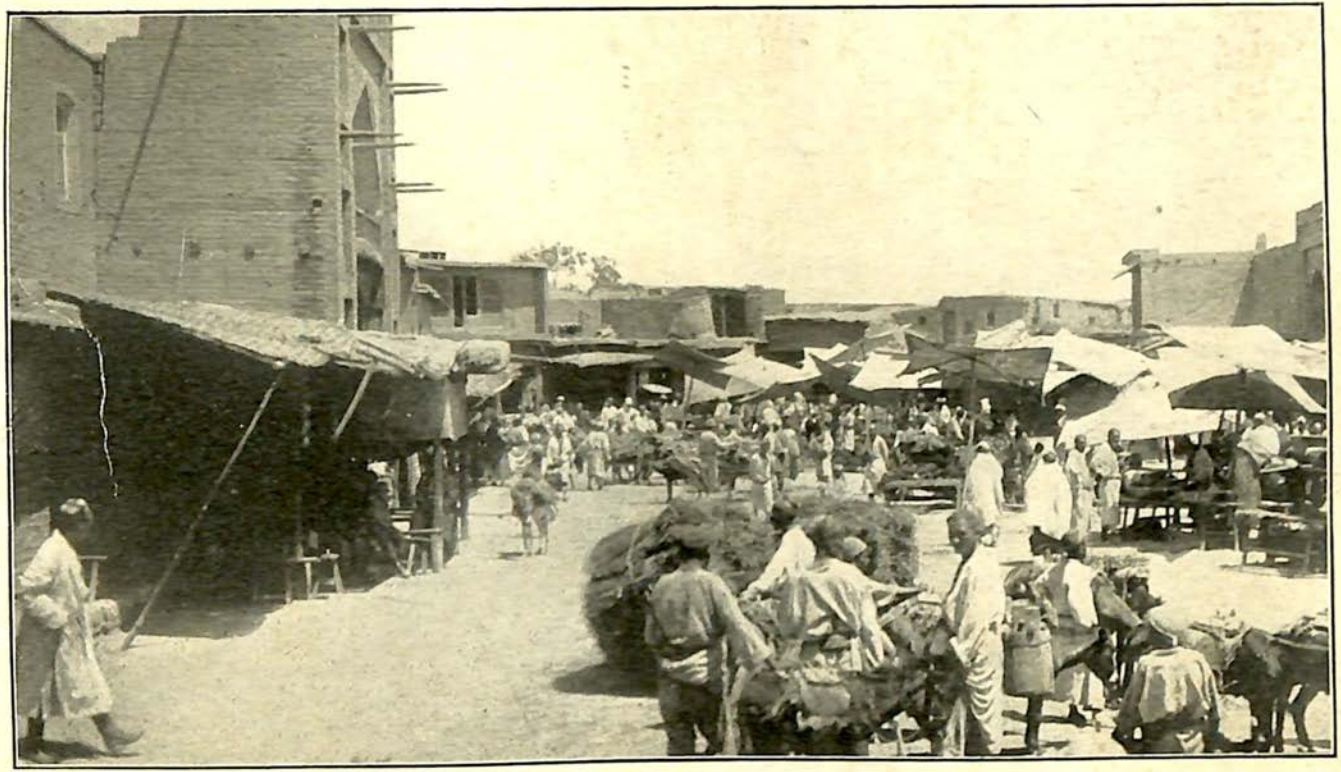
THE bazaars of Bokhara, next to those of Tashkend, are the largest in Central Asia, and cover twenty-four acres of ground. They are divided into thirty-two streets, or aisles, each being devoted to the sale of the same class of articles for the convenience of customers, and representing one of the thirty-two guilds, which comprise the whole field of commerce in Turkestan. The guilds are similar to those in India, Turkey, and Persia, and I suppose they correspond to those in China and Japan. The number is limited to thirty-two, for the reason that the human body was supposed by the ancients to be made up of thirty-two semi-independent and semi-dependent members. Each guild has a perfect organization, with officers and committees, similar to the ancient trade organizations of London, and exercises autocratic authority over all industries and mercantile enterprises. The guilds regulate prices and wages, terms of employment, the number of apprentices, rates of interest, credits and other conditions of manufacture, purchase and sale, and some of them are subdivided into smaller classes for convenience.

The bazaars of Bokhara furnish one of the most picturesque scenes in all human life — the articles of merchandise being quite as interesting as the men who handle them. The most curious of all are blocks of rose-coloured rock salt,

which looks like pink ice. It is brought from a mine near Karshi, on the Chinese side of the mountains, about forty miles distant. There are, however, many other odd articles for sale, and one can spend hours and even days in the bazaars, watching the manufacture and the sale of strange looking goods.

As in other native cities, the streets and little shops are protected from the sun and rain by roofs of masonry or awnings of matting, so that the trade is conducted in a perpetual twilight. The streets are so narrow that it is difficult for two carriages to pass. It is often necessary for the drivers to climb down from their boxes and lift the wheels as closely as possible to the walls, so that they can squeeze by. Blockades are caused continually by caravans of camels laden with bulky bales, lines of donkeys bearing animate and inanimate loads, ox carts and carriages, which often become massed in confusion, when everybody gets excited and begins clamouring, cursing, and gesticulating in a furious way. But the greatest demonstrations are made when the counters of some unlucky merchant are swept clear of merchandise by the lurching of a clumsy camel. Then it is possible to see how excited these serene and contemplative Orientals can become when something happens to them. Foot passengers dodge in and out between the caravans and the horsemen, and that takes some nerve and skill, because every few minutes there is a scampering for refuge as a squad of Kirghiz horsemen comes galloping recklessly down the narrow streets.

The bazaar is not given up entirely to trade. There are lots of little eating-houses and kitchens, where the merchants and their customers lunch or dine. The cooking



MARKET PLACE IN BOKHARA.

is done on the edge of the sidewalk, where the patrons can inspect the process, and over the open charcoal fires, which fill the atmosphere with savoury smells. Sherbet peddlers go about with queer-looking tanks on their backs, clinking glasses together to attract attention, and in the tea houses the attendants draw hot water from steaming samovars into dainty little china pots, into which they have dropped a pinch of tea leaves. Customers bring their bread and cake with them, which they purchase at the neighbouring shops.

Bokhara is the most important commercial centre in Turkestan and does a business of about $25,000,000 annually, carrying on an active trade by caravans with China, India, Afghanistan, and other countries. The merchandise that comes by rail from Russia is stored in large warehouses along the railway track until the camels are ready to be loaded. The produce that is brought in by these same camels is transferred to the railway cars and sent westward to the Caspian Sea or northward to the Great Siberian Railway en route to Astrakhan, Odessa, Baku, Moscow, and other Russian markets. From China, India and Afghanistan are brought vast quantities of tea, silk, earthenware, drugs, furs, mutton tallow, camels' hair, goats' hair, dyestuffs and other raw materials, as well as finished products, to be exchanged for cotton goods, sugar, coffee, hardware, and a large variety of other merchandise from the factories of Moscow and other Russian cities. The Russians are gradually robbing Great Britain of her markets in Afghanistan, Cashmir, and other provinces of western India, but the largest amount of goods is shipped across the mountains into China.

The wholesale and the retail traders are mixed in the bazaars, and every now and then you come to a wholesale khan, which is entered through a narrow passage, between a couple of shops, and occupies a large space in the interior of the block, behind the little retail booths. These khans are a combination of hotels and freight houses. There is usually one large courtyard or more paved with stone, with a fountain in the centre, and a small mosque at one side. The courtyard, during the business hours of the day, is pretty well filled with caravans of camels, and groups of solemn, patient, uncomplaining donkeys, loading or unloading. The camels are used for long hauls and the donkeys for short hauls, and they carry an infinite variety of goods. There are a few ox carts, with enormous wheels, seven and eight feet in diameter, and saddle horses, equipped with queer-looking accoutrements and gayly decorated bridles. Opening upon the courtyards are warerooms of different sizes, which can be rented for a day or a night, or for a month or any length of time, as salesrooms or for storage, and the tenants usually sleep with their goods, and take their meals at the cook houses and cafés in the neighbourhood.

The khans are classified, some for rugs, some for skins, each being located in the street where that particular merchandise belongs, and when a caravan arrives with a mixed cargo the camels are distributed accordingly. The patrons are mostly regulars. Business is hereditary in those countries, and the eldest son is expected to follow the trade of his father. Thus the same families have patronized the same khans for centuries, always occupying the same rooms and doing business with the descendants of the

customers their great-great-grandfathers dealt with. This accounts, in some measure, for the long credits. Faith and confidence increase with age and experience.

The business men of Bokhara and other Mohammedan communities are very scrupulous in the observance of their religious duties, and when the call of the muezzin is heard from the minaret, merchants and customers drop everything, their samples and their memoranda, and hurry to the nearest mosque to say their prayers. They kneel in rows upon the rugs, occupying the same spots every day, just as our people are in the habit of occupying the same pews at church, and perform the genûflections in unison. Then, when they have finished their prayers and have repeated the name of Allah ninety-three times, they arise from their knees, pick up their shoes, and leave the mosque together. Suppose Chicago or New York wholesale dealers and the country merchants who come in to buy goods should drop business as the clock strikes 12 and go to the noon-day prayer meeting together. It is hard to tell what the effect would be on trade, but the experiment might be tried. Or, the brokers on the New York Stock Exchange or the traders on the board of trade in Chicago might station muezzins in the galleries to notify them of the hours for devotions, and have a side room fitted up where they could pray for grace, mercy, and peace a few moments each day.

The cool twilight of the bazaars is very grateful to the senses of a tired man when he enters from the blazing heat and stifling dust outside. The atmosphere is kept moist by half-naked men who sprinkle water upon the streets. They carry their supply in pigs' skins or goats' skins — which are also used for wine — slung upon their backs, and open

and close the necks by the pressure of the fingers in such a way as to scatter the water in a fine spray over the surface of the ground, with as much skill as a Chinaman uses in sprinkling his laundry work.

Merchants sit cross-legged on the rugs which decorate the floors of their little booths, and their customers either stand in the street or squat down on the threshold. Most of the shops are so small that a merchant can reach every article in his stock without rising. The walls of the booths are lined with shelves and cases, except where heavy goods are dealt in. And the variety is infinite. Every possible article that a human being can need or desire may be found, from a cake of soap to a sewing machine or a phonograph. The latter articles, with revolvers, are about the only goods that come from the United States. Nearly everything else is from Russia.

Trade is conducted leisurely and with the greatest decorum. A merchant must have an opportunity to show his skill at a bargain, and, as prices are more or less flexible, the customers enter into the spirit of the business and keep up what the Spaniards call the "negotio" for as long a time as they can spare. If you should accept the first offer, a merchant would be offended, because you would deprive him of an opportunity to show his shrewdness.

There are a few women shoppers, but they are swathed in large cotton or silk shawls, and their faces are concealed by horsehair veils. Most of the buying is done by men.

The jewellers, the brass workers, the leather dealers, and various other trades carry on their manufacturing in the presence of their customers. Goldsmiths and silversmiths are always interesting to watch. They are usually Tartars

and have tiny charcoal furnaces, with apprentices who handle the bellows and keep the tools in order.

The street of the brass workers is like a boiler factory. The hammering is incessant, but it is nevertheless interesting to see the skill with which thin sheets of brass are hammered into urns, ewers, pots, kettles, and other useful utensils.

The drug-shops are fascinating, the entire walls being lined with tiny drawers and shelves, with coloured labels, and the ceiling decorated with bunches of dried herbs and fruit. You can get a lemon compressed into the size of a nutmeg and all sorts of spices and toilet articles. The women of the harem use a great deal of attar of roses, and surma, a black powder of antimony, for blackening the eyelashes, and rice powder for whitening the face.

The dealers in china and earthenware show some pretty pottery, which is made in the villages around Bokhara, and some fine specimens of Chinese porcelains come over the mountains by the caravans. The largest division of the bazaars is filled with cotton goods of every possible variety, most of them from the factories at Moscow. Occasionally you find some local or home-made fabrics, but they are becoming very scarce. Since the railway has made transportation easy and cheap, household looms cannot compete with the factories.

Bokhara is famous for its rugs, its silks and its embroideries of silk on cotton, and is a large market for Persian lamb-skins. The rugs and embroideries are in unique shades of red, not found elsewhere, and the dyes by which they are produced are supposed to be made by secret formulas which have been handed down from generation to generation in Jewish families, who control the business. Both rugs

and embroideries, however, can be bought to better advantage in London, Constantinople, Smyrna, and, indeed, in New York, Chicago, or Washington than there, because the best examples are picked up by agents of the big jobbers of Smyrna, Constantinople, London, and Moscow, and never appear in the local market. Those jobbers have men travelling through the country looking after their regular sources of supply and picking up bargains. The antique rugs you see in the shops of the United States, and offered for sale at auction, come from the cabins and kabitkas (tents or tepees) of the nomadic tribes, and have been in use for generations. The natives place a very high valuation upon them. Like the shawls of Cashmir, rugs are handed down from father to son for hundreds of years as the most precious heirlooms in the family. They do not come into the market, except upon the death or bankruptcy of the owner.

There are a dozen enormous khans, or central warehouses, devoted to rugs in Bokhara, but a stranger cannot see them made, because the work is done by the women of the harems, who are never visible. Every house has a loom, and every girl learns to weave as soon as her strength is sufficient for the task. Thereafter she does her stunt every day, mother and daughters taking turns, and keeping the loom humming from sunrise to sunset. The pattern is fixed and seldom changed, although the same family may produce two or three different patterns. There are probably not more than ten or twelve designs in all the rugs that have been produced in Bokhara from the beginning of time. To-day not more than four or five different patterns are used, although they may vary slightly in detail.

You never see buyers from Constantinople and other

large markets in the khans, because the rugs sold there are of no value for export. They are of the poorest quality, intended for local consumption; but if a European attempts to buy one he will be astonished at the prices. We visited several of the khans, and the rug shops in the bazaars, and the prices asked for the ordinary quality were higher than fine rugs bring at auction in Washington, after the freight and duty have been paid. A friend consoled us with the observation that "the native dealers here think that Americans have more money than brains." This was more satisfactory than complimentary, and I have no doubt it is the truth.

The best rugs made in the world at present, the experts have told me, come from a place called Keshan, near the capital of Persia, where the wool is finer, the weavers are more skilful, and the patterns more artistic than anywhere else. Bokhara rugs are second in value, and the town of Tekke, in that province, produces the finest examples. This is due to the quality of the wool, which is soft and fine, the skill and care of the weavers, and the quality of the dyes. The latter is of the greatest importance. It is chiefly the dye that gives the Bokhara rugs their value. The process of mixture is a secret, as I have said. Each prominent dyer has his own recipes, but the same ingredients are used by all and are well known. The indigo, which is the only foreign ingredient, comes from India and Brazil (purchased at Marseilles). The cochineal, which gives the rugs their intense red colour, is made from a tiny insect found upon the leaves of the ash, the mulberry, and other trees. At a certain season of the year the bugs are scraped off, roasted in dripping pans, and crushed to a powder.

Other ingredients are vegetable, plants which grow wild and are also cultivated in the gardens of the peasants. They are madder, isparuk, a species of larkspur which produces a beautiful, bright, and lasting yellow; tukhmak, which is a species of the japonica, and pugnak, a fungus found on the mulberry trees. The roots of the fuchsia, the peel of the pomegranate, and the nut of the pistachio are all used, and are mixed with ordinary soot and a substance produced by burning linseed oil. Skill and experience in the mixture of these various ingredients are necessary to produce the colours that are so much admired in the Bokhara rugs.

The cakes of india ink used by artists in the United States and for common, ordinary writing purposes by the Hindus and other Orientals, are made of the same materials mixed with rice powder and dried in a slow oven.

There is a severe law against the use of aniline dyes. Their sale is prohibited under a heavy penalty, but I could not learn that anybody has ever been punished on that account.

All of the numerous tribes which make up the millions of population of Turkestan manufacture rugs. They have had no other way of disposing of the wool from their flocks, and their products are known to the market by various names — generally those of the principal cities of Turkestan. Like the Panama hat, a rug is called after the place where it is sold, rather than after the place where it is made. No hat was ever made in Panama, but that city has always been the market for the product of Ecuador, Peru, and the towns along the coast of southern Colombia.

Until American cotton was introduced by General Kaufmann, viceroy of Turkestan in the '80's, silk culture was the

most important industry in Turkestan. The value of the silk worm was discovered in China and the process of utilizing it was invented there in prehistoric times. Gradually the industry spread throughout the whole of Asia, and silk culture has been the most lucrative and the chief occupation of the people. The climate of Central Asia is in the highest degree favourable to silk culture. The mulberry, which is the sole food of the silk worm, grows rapidly wherever there is water. There is no rain or hail during the summer and seldom at any time of the year. No artificial heat is necessary for the cultivation of the worms, and it has been a convenient occupation for the poor and a recreation for the rich women of the harems. Mulberry trees are raised from the seed and in five years will produce leaves fit to be used as food for the worms.

The best silk in Central Asia is produced in Bokhara; next comes that of Kokand and then that of Khiva. Silk is spun and woven in the households by women and children and the yarn is dyed by the Jews. The colours are absolutely durable and the fabric has a firmness and brightness which are never lost. The lustre for which the Bokhara silks are famous is produced by beating the yarn with a wide, flat, wooden flail.

Most of the silk goods are woven in stripes of the most brilliant colours, because such fabrics are in demand for the coats of the men in that country. The women wear comparatively little silk. Their pride of dress is not developed because they seldom leave their homes, they see no men but their husbands and children, and very little of each other. There is no such thing as society in Mohammedan countries.

The women, however, are remarkably skilful weavers and produce the most exquisite velvets and brocades. The best embroideries are made by men, and any one who wanders through the bazaars can see them at work in their shops.

What are known in the market as Bokhara embroideries are in the form of tablecloths, towels, bed covers, and draperies of cotton with conventional designs and geometrical figures worked out with crimson silk, the colours being almost identical with those that have given the Bokhara rugs their great reputation. Very little of this embroidery is now produced because there is more money in rugs. Nearly all the examples offered for sale have been used and come from the homes of the people. At present the embroiderers devote their time to decorating material for caps, waistcoats, and other garments, and the patterns are always the same, like those of the carpets. The cotton cloth on which the pattern has been stencilled is stretched over a frame, and the artist, with a crochet needle set in a wooden handle, pulls the silken thread through in a sort of chained stitch with the greatest rapidity.

Very few pieces of embroidery are offered for sale there, however. You can buy to much better advantage in Constantinople or even in the United States. A well-known Chicago gentleman, who has visited Turkestan twice and is a recognized authority on matters pertaining to that part of the world, carried home with him from his last trip a very handsome specimen of Bokhara embroidery. A few weeks after his return he was astonished to find an exact duplicate hanging upon the wall of a friend in Evanston, who had purchased it at a department store in Chicago.

My friend went to that store the next day and found fifty pieces precisely like his own, offered for sale at a less price than he had paid in Bokhara.

In 1889 General Kaufmann, the viceroy, desiring to encourage the silk business, imported a Corsican expert, who has done a great deal to educate the people and improve the culture of silk worms. He has introduced millions of eggs from France and French machinery and appurtenances to replace the clumsy methods of the natives, and has prepared instructions which have been printed in all the native languages and distributed free among the people.

The silk industry is conducted very much like the rug business. The merchants furnish the yarn in both cases, after having it dyed the colours they want, and then pay the weavers so much a square yard, according to the quality of the work. Some of the larger commission men and agents of Constantinople, and Moscow jobbers, have hundreds of families working for them in this way, and go about collecting their products periodically. A woman can earn twenty or twenty-two cents a day weaving.

A beautiful velvet is woven at Bokhara which is used for the robes of officials. I saw a group of magistrates at Tashkend offering their congratulations to the viceroy upon the birthday of the Czar, who wore velvet robes of brilliant colours and looked like animated rainbows. But I am told that the production of both velvet and brocades is dying out because the women and girls of Bokhara cannot compete with Jacquard looms. Silks from the factories at Moscow are rapidly driving home-made material out of the market. The scarfs of gauzy silk which the

women wear all come from Moscow to-day. Although wealthy and conservative families insist upon home-made fabrics, which cost a little more, the ordinary buyer is satisfied with factory goods.

As in China, it is customary to make presents of silk to those whose favour or affection is coveted. The emir of Bokhara, the Russian governor-general, the police officials, and others who are feared or favoured, receive rolls of costly fabrics on their birthdays and other occasions, and such gifts are more and more appreciated, as the genuine hand-woven silks are becoming rare.

Wedding outfits of linen and silk are no longer woven in the household. They are purchased in the bazaars and bear the trademarks of Moscow merchants.

The Jews are a very large and important element in the population of Bokhara, and their business ability, their honourable dealings, and their enterprise have won for them unlimited credit, commercial and moral. They are the leading merchants and bankers of the place; they control the silk market; they own most of the camel caravans which furnish transportation to China, Afghanistan, and various sections of Turkestan; they are largely interested in the rug business and in handling Persian lamb-skins, and are so skilful in dyeing wools and silk that they practically monopolize that business. If you will watch them closely you will notice that the fingers of half the Jews you see in bazaars and on the streets, at the railway stations and elsewhere, are stained up to the knuckles with the dyes they use.

The Jews of Bokhara and Samarkand and other cities of Turkestan are nearly all descended from Israelites who

drifted over from Assyria at the time of the captivity, and have lived unmolested ever since, although they have been restricted at times and have often been compelled to pay blackmail for protection; but that has been the experience of every rich man. Whenever one of the despotic chiefs who have ruled that country, or any other semi-civilized country, for that matter, feels the need of money he gets it the easiest way he can. That is usually by squeezing it out of those of his subjects who have it to spare, and the Jews have been the easiest marks. Their wealth, however, is overestimated from our point of view. People there have a lower standard. A man who is worth 100,000 rubles is considered rich, while one who has 1,000,000 rubles, which is equivalent to $500,000, is a Crœsus. Before the Russians came, and even now, in Bokhara, those who saved money were compelled to hide it and pretend that they were poor. No man will admit that he has money in Bokhara even to-day, because the tax collectors are compelled to satisfy the demands of the emir, who is a perfect cormorant, and assesses without mercy those who are able to pay.

That is the reason the Jewish population of Bokhara is falling off and that of Samarkand, Tashkend, Kokand, and other Russian cities is increasing so rapidly. The Russians are fair to the Jews in all these Asiatic settlements because they need their money and their enterprise, but there is no telling what will happen when they begin to crowd their Russian competitors off the road. The persecution of the Jews in Russia has never been due to religious prejudice, but to professional and commercial jealousy. The Jews are so much superior to the Russians in ability, industry,

enterprise, and in the other qualities which are necessary for success in every-day business and in every community, that they are absorbing about all that is worth having, and the only way the Russians can hold their own is by depriving their Jewish competitors of the means and opportunities of making money.

There are Jewish quarters in all of the cities of Turkestan and the limits of some of them were fixed by authority, and the Jews were confined to them at one time, but to-day a Jew can live where he likes and carry on any business that suits him. There are no restrictions whatever. Formerly under the khans they were forbidden horses and could ride only donkeys. They were compelled to wear ropes for girdles; many of them do so still, for they consider them badges of honour, but the young men dress like the rest of the community. Jewish women, as a protection against insult and unpleasant remarks, wear the same veils that are used by the Moslem women. They would be too conspicuous if they went into the street without them, but they discard them at home, and men and women mingle together as freely as in the United States.

There are a number of synagogues in Bokhara and Samarkand, but they are not conspicuous. The policy of the race has been to avoid attracting more attention than is necessary. The merchants observe Saturday and attend religious services in the morning. Some of them open their shops Saturday afternoon. They keep open on Friday, which is the Mohammedan Sabbath, and on Sunday. All the shops are open on Sunday, even those of the Greeks, but on Friday business is partially suspended.

The Afghans also claim to be descendants of the Jews of

the captivity and there are traditions that large numbers of families migrated from Babylon to Afghanistan.

The private houses of "Bokhara the Noble," and, indeed, of all the native towns, are built of unadulterated mud, without straw and without burning, and therefore their walls constantly require rebuilding. In a rainy climate like that of Panama or the southern part of the United States a house would not last a year, but in that dry atmosphere, with only an occasional shower, it will survive a lifetime, and, indeed, many generations, if repairs are carefully kept up. The soil is a sticky clay and, when moistened, will adhere like pitch to any object, and is as pliable as wax. It will stain dark clothing like grease and has to be scraped off woollen fabrics with a knife. Ordinary brushes are of no use in cleaning a suit of clothes of Turkestan mud.

When a citizen of Bokhara wants to build a house he begins by digging a trench on the line of the walls from twelve to eighteen inches deep. This trench is filled with water from the nearest irrigation canal, and then he shovels in loose earth and tramps it down with his bare feet and often with heavy pestles or rammers. As soon as the trench is filled he makes a mould of boards, which he continues to fill with wet clay, and packs it down as he did the foundation. Occasionally he places a layer of bricks which have been moulded and pressed and dried in the sun, and continues to alternate these materials until the walls reach the required height. He places board frames where he wants doors, and fills in around them. There are seldom any windows, but they are growing fashionable. In some of the houses recently erected panes of glass have been introduced. This, however, is a decided innovation.

After the walls are finished the builder fills in the chinks and crevices and then smears the whole surface, inside and out, with a plaster made of the same mud. When the first coat dries he puts on another, and perhaps several; then, if he is particular, he puts on a coat of whitewash, usually coloured with some bright tint, but 90 per cent of the houses are of the ordinary mud colour.

The roof is made by laying rafters across, covering them with reeds and then with straw, and finally with a layer of earth which weighs the straw down and protects it from the wind. The reeds can be bought in the market. You see boys and women bringing in bales of them from the country on the backs of camels and donkeys. It is a recognized business quite as much as lumber dealing is with us. They cost little, a well-laid thatch lasts for years, and, of course, can be replaced without much expense when necessary. The rafters are the trunks of young poplar trees which are planted and cultivated for that purpose. A poplar farm is a profitable enterprise.

Two or three hard rains would wash a Bokhara house into the gutter, but rains are rare in that country, and the mud walls crumble under the force of the wind more than under the rain. Hence a prudent house owner will smear the outside of his dwelling over with a new coat of mud at least once a year. It does not cost much, either in money or labour, and he can get the material in his own garden or even by the roadside.

Ninety per cent of the buildings in Bokhara are made in this way. The mosques and meddresses, the minarets and other public buildings, are made of kiln-dried brick, about eighteen inches long and an inch thick, similar to

those used in Pompeii and in ancient Greece. They are more expensive than sun-dried brick, because of the scarcity of fuel, but are not affected by the weather or the climate and are practically indestructible.

Building material in all rainless districts, however, is the same. The Casa Grande ruins in Arizona and the pueblos of the southwestern Indians are almost exactly like the dwellings of Bokhara, Samarkand, Merv, and other provinces of Turkestan, and if they were transported here they would fit into the picture perfectly.

A history of Bokhara was written by Armenius Vambery, a Hungarian, in 1873, and published in London. It has been very severely criticized, however, and has been declared unreliable.

In strolling about the bazaars and mosques of Bokhara and other cities we occasionally witnessed performances of "hafiscas," or professional elocutionists, similar to the minstrels of Scotland and the trovador of ancient Spain. Some of them are aged men, patriarchial in appearance, with long, white beards, snowy turbans, heavy eyebrows, and dark, deep, serious eyes. Others are mere boys, fourteen or fifteen years of age, handsome fellows with clear olive complexions, fine teeth, regular features and graceful movements. They are often theological students, or "softas," as they are called. With unmusical voices pitched at a painfully high key, like the songs of the Japanese, the hafiscas recite religious and historical poems. Some of them have dramatic fervour and the merit of true eloquence, but too often their recitals are spoiled by a sing-song monotony of tone that is expressionless to us, but is greatly admired by Orientals. Chinese singing is musical to Chinese ears, but not to

Europeans. When the hafiscas begin their performances before a coffee house, in the vestibule of a mosque or in the market places, they are promptly surrounded by admiring audiences who squat on the ground in circles around them and listen with breathless attention. There is never any applause. I suppose it would be considered undignified, but everybody expresses his approval by tossing a copper into the hat when it is passed around.

Bokhara is celebrated for its cats. They are of the same breed as the Persian cats which are often found in the United States and are now being bred quite extensively among our people. They have long, thick, silken, black hair and bushy tails, which they are very vain of and keep in perfect order. A Bokhara cat spends as much time on her toilet as a damosel dressing for a ball. Their habits are neat, they have good tempers, are excellent mousers and make perfect household pets.

The dogs are mongrels, mangy creatures. They sneak around the bazaars and market places seeking for food and are the real scavengers of the place, like those of Constantinople. Michel Naskidoff, our dragoman, who is familiar with the East, said he has never seen a decent dog in a Mohammedan country, which I think is very likely true.

In the centre of the bazaars of Bokhara is a large rectangular khan of two stories, with many rooms of different sizes opening upon the ground on the first story and upon a balcony in the second story. Most of these rooms are filled with Persian lamb-skins, and in several of them are little baby lambs, alive and anxious for their safety, and you can hear them bleat in piteous tones, like the crying of a

child that is frightened at the dark. Trains of camels and donkeys are coming and going all the time through the wide door, leaving and taking away large bales of black, curly skins which are now so fashionable for ladies' garments. If you will look around you can see men engaged in sorting and packing them, tied together in bundles, each bundle containing skins of similar size. This is the centre of the lamb-skin trade, a sort of chamber of commerce or exchange, where the sellers meet the buyers, and deliveries as well as contracts are made. There are often very large transactions, involving thousands of skins, between agents of jobbing houses in Moscow, Constantinople, Vienna, London, Geneva, and other cities. Public letter writers are in attendance to draw contracts and make records of transactions, as on the stock exchanges and boards of trade in the United States, and money changers are at the gates who receive frequent information of the rates of exchange.

Millions of skins change hands in that place every year. They are brought in from the steppes and the villages of Turkestan and shipped to Europe and America to make miladi's form divine look diviner still. The emir of Bokhara has an agent always present watching for especially fine skins, which he seizes for his master, who sends them as presents to the empresses and queens and princesses of the European courts. Prices range from five rubles to forty rubles a skin — that is, from $2.50 to $20 — but it is not profitable to buy there, because, to be of value, skins must be perfectly matched.

One of the most interesting of the processes to be seen in the bazaars of Bokhara is the manufacture of felt, which is a specialty of the Kirghiz, a nomadic tribe inhabiting

the steppes north of Bokhara and far away to the banks of the Sea of Aral. They are also famous for their cloth of camels' hair, their robes, their bridles and saddle equipment, and their tent frames.

To manufacture felt, a mat of straw or reeds, woven very skilfully, is placed upon the floor or the ground and covered with a thin layer of wool soaked in oil. This layer of wool is beaten with rods for several hours daily and after each beating is sprinkled with oil. After four days the matting, together with the wool which adheres to it, is rolled up as tightly as possible, tied so that it cannot come apart, and then rolled along the ground. After it has been pressed in this way for several hours on each of several days, and in the meantime left in the heat of the sun, it is unrolled again, sprinkled with water, beaten with rods, and then rolled up again until the fibres of the wool adhere to each other so closely that the moisture cannot penetrate them. The colour of the felt depends upon the colour of the wool. It may be black or white or brown. No dyes are used. The black felt is sold to make fezzes for the Persians, the white felt for the Afghans and the brown felt for the dervishes.

The righistan, or public square, of Bokhara is immediately in front of the ark, or citadel, in which the emir and his officials are supposed to reside. On another side are the armory and barracks of the emir's military guard. On the third side is a mosque and on the fourth a row of shops, tea houses, restaurants, barber-shops, and booths of butchers and bakers and provision dealers. During the day a considerable part of the square is occupied by hucksters, peasant farmers from the country who bring in vegetables, fruit,

eggs and other produce and garden truck, and when they have disposed of their stock they fold up their tents like the Arabs and silently steal away.

Connected by a narrow passage with the righistan is a square pool known as the Liabehaus Divan Begi or resting place of the finance minister. This stone basin, like all the others in the city, is filled with nasty-looking yellow fluid four or five feet deep, which is reached by flights of steps from the surrounding terrace, and at any time of day, from sunrise to sunset, you can witness the extraordinary spectacle of persons using the same water for bathing, washing soiled clothing, and drinking. A fur merchant will bring the skin of a Persian lamb or some other article from his stock and scrub it with soap and brush alongside of a servant who is filling an urn for the use of his master's household. A butcher will bring a chunk of meat, which has fallen from his counter, to wash off the dust; a hackman will dip up a bucketful of the slimy fluid to refresh his horses, and the next moment will return with a piece of greasy harness which he will dip into the basin and scrub until it is clean. There is no use to which water can be put that is not adopted at some time during the day upon the steps of this pool, and people tell me that they have seen the same man wash his feet and afterward dip up an urn of drinking water from the same spot within five minutes.

There are many bathhouses in Bokhara similar to those in Constantinople and other Turkish cities, although there are no private rooms. Everybody dresses and receives massage in the same room and wallows in the same pool. It is filled with steaming water, heated by charcoal fires underneath and flowing in and out slowly, so that the

temperature can be maintained at the same degree. The stone platform of the room surrounding the basin is wet and slippery and there are no hooks upon which a bather can hang his clothes. Around the wall is a bench of masonry, coated with cement, where the patrons sit while they remove their garments, and on one side, perhaps two, is a wide platform, in an alcove, where massage work is done.

After removing his clothing the bather sits around for five or ten minutes to accustom himself to the temperature; then descends gradually, a step at a time, into the pool, which is heated to 110 or 115 degrees. He will find it already occupied by several other persons, but it does not seem to be an objection. He remains in the water as long as he likes and is permitted to use soap, which is usually applied with a bunch of coarse fibre similar to the excelsior that our furniture dealers use for packing. Much of this substance becomes detached and floats around on the top of the water with the scum of the soap, but that does not seem to be an objection either. Finally, when the bather has had all the soaking he wants and has cleansed himself as thoroughly as he desires, he climbs out of the pool and lies down upon the stone platform, where the masseur, if he chooses to employ one, works over him as long as he wishes.

The practice is about the same as that of ordinary massage, but a little rougher. The masseur, who is stark naked, often climbs upon the back of his client, and, with a curious motion, slides up and down, with a knee each side of his spine. How this is done it is difficult to understand. None but experts can accomplish the feat. A skilful masseur can, however, make a journey on his knees from the neck to the hips of his client several times without slipping off,

and that is supposed to be very effective in strengthening the spine and the diaphragm of the patient.

After the massage the bather takes another dip in the pool, wraps himself in a sheet, and lies down wherever he can find a place. Sometimes people sleep in these hot rooms all night, but usually, after an hour or two, they go out into the front room, drink a cup of tea or coffee and gradually dress.

CHAPTER XI

TAMERLANE AND HIS CONQUESTS

TIMOUR the Tartar was one of those splendid, spectacular figures that occasionally illuminated the history of the East. He conquered all Asia; for a quarter of a century he was practically master of the entire world; he was the founder of the Mogul dynasty of India, and the first of the conquerors and kings beyond the Bosphorus to display a taste for architecture and an ambition to create monuments of majesty and beauty. Under him and his successors was developed in India, Turkestan, and Persia what is known as the Saracenic or Arabesque school of architects, who expressed their ideas in grandeur of proportions and massiveness rather than in delicacy of detail. They grouped great piles of masonry of perfect symmetry, and enamelled them with tiles of turquoise and sapphire and inscriptions in Sanscrit characters, which form the most artistic friezes you can imagine. Like Catharine II of Russia, Frederick the Great of Prussia, and Louis XIV of France, he brought to his capital artists, architects, and scholars from all the world, and the mosques, the meddresses, and the tombs of Samarkand still demonstrate their genius and his generosity. Timour was the ancestor of Abkar, the great Mogul of India, who created the glorious marble symphonies of Delhi and of Shah Jehan, who built the Taj Mahal at Agra, India, which is admitted to

TIMOUR. ORIGINAL IN BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.

be the most beautiful structure ever framed by human hands.

Tamerlane was a nickname given to Timour by his soldiers after he recovered from a wound that crippled him for life. He was one of the ugliest men in history. A Persian poet declared that "a sight of him would derange the ecstasies of the orthodox." He was not only a cripple, but was blind in one eye. It is said that one day he chanced to catch sight of himself in a mirror and was so horrified by his ugliness that he began to weep. Chodscha, one of his favourites, expostulated, saying:

"If thou hast seen thy face but once and, seeing, hast not been able to control thy grief, what should we do who look upon thy face every day and every night?"

But, notwithstanding these deformities, Tamerlane possessed extraordinary personal magnetism and a dignity which compelled recognition of his ability and character. One of his admirers declared that he was "strong as an elephant; his shadow extends for miles; his heart is as boundless as the ocean, and his hands are like the clouds when rain falls to gladden the earth."

He was born in 1336 in the kibitka, or tent, of Teragay, his father, who was the chief of a band of shepherds. When the child was taken to a mullah of noted sanctity to receive his name the priest happened to be reading aloud from the Koran the lines: "Are ye sure that he who dwells in heaven will not bid the earth to devour you? Lo, it shall shake!" As he pronounced the last word the mullah was interrupted by Teragay and remarked indifferently, "Let the child be called Timour" — the Arabic word for "shake."

The boy grew up with other children of the desert, and

could ride and draw a bow almost as soon as he could walk. The priest took a fancy to him and taught him to read; he was always a leader of his playmates, and at seventeen was the boldest horseman, the most skilful hunter, and the hero of his tribe. Then he began to have dreams and saw strange visions. In one of them the Prophet Mohammed stood before him and promised that seventy-two of his descendants should be kings. At the age of twenty-one he visited the court at Samarkand and impressed Kurgan, the fierce old emir, so favourably that he was given his granddaughter, the Princess Aljaz Agha for his bride.

The wedding was celebrated with great splendour; Timour and his bride were conspicuous figures at court and he was made commander of the king's guard. Then came a period of plotting and fighting, which ended in the overthrow and assassination of Kurgan, and the flight of Timour and his bride into the desert with a band of only sixty men. On the banks of the Oxus he raised as a battle standard a crescent topped with a red horse's tail. Shepherd chiefs and fugitives from Samarkand joined him and offered their allegiance, and before the end of a year he found himself at the head of 6,000 warriors. The people hailed him as the saviour of the land and he was soon seated upon the throne of his father-in-law at Samarkand.

A vision in the night inflamed his ambition. The Prophet stood before him again and said: "There is no God but Allah; there shall be no prince on earth but Timour." In the morning when he awakened he devised a plan of conquest which comprehended the earth. He led his army in a suit of armour that he believed had been worn by David, King of Israel; his finger ring contained an opal which turned red

when a falsehood was spoken in his hearing; the Prophet Mohammed appeared to him frequently and directed his movements, and his enemies as well as his friends believed that he was inspired from heaven.

For thirty years he was engaged in carrying out his plan of conquest, and he moved from the Ægean Sea to the eastern-most limits of India, followed by hundreds of thousands of warriors. He lived in an immense pavilion of scarlet silk embroidered with gems. His equipage was carried in a cart with wheels twenty feet in diameter and drawn by thirty-two oxen. He threatened Moscow one year and camped before Delhi the next. Everywhere he was victorious. Nothing could resist his impetuous attacks, and he led armies of men across deserts and over mountains which to-day are declared impassable.

When he stood before the gates of Delhi, the capital of India, and demanded its surrender, the sultan came forth with 50,000 soldiers and a herd of 10,000 elephants whose trunks were tipped with poisoned blades. Tamerlane met them with a herd of camels laden with hay, which he set on fire. The elephants, terrified by the flames, wheeled around and ran, trampling down the sultan's army that was behind them. Tamerlane in triumph, entered the gates of Delhi and, seated upon the sultan's throne, proclaimed himself sovereign of India. He established a viceroy to reign in his name and returned to Samarkand with those same elephants loaded with the spoils.

When he was celebrating his victories in the East a new light burst out upon the Bosphorus. Bajazet, the sultan of the Ottomans, also called Ildrim, which means "the lightning," had invaded and plundered several of the states

which composed the western end of Timour's empire. The latter marched from Samarkand, through Persia to Syria, sacked Aleppo and Damascus, and on the 8th of June, 1402, overcame and captured Bajazet, after one of the bloodiest battles in the history of mankind.

One by one, this shepherd boy grasped the crowns of seven and twenty kings and for twenty years his authority was undisputed in Asia outside of the Chinese Empire. Samarkand, his capital, was gorged with loot from Turkey, Persia, Syria, India, and the cities of the Muscovites, and he determined to make it the rival of Rome in architectural splendour and intellectual culture. He brought wise men from the East, artists from the West, and adventurers from all the territory between the Persian Gulf and the polar sea, and the Volga and the Ganges. The wise, the learned and the ambitious thronged the palaces of Samarkand. Ambassadors from the kingdoms of Europe came to make treaties with him and brought gifts of great value.

But even the powerful can tempt the gods too far, and Tamerlane's ambition overreached itself. All Asia, except the Chinese nation, now paid homage to the shepherd boy of the desert. He had attained a power and enjoyed a glory equal to that of Alexander the Great, and was not willing to rest until he had overcome and plundered the Chinese cities, which were reported to be an exhaustless source of treasure.

Tamerlane spent the year 1404 preparing for his expedition, and in January, 1405, followed by 200,000 fighting men, set out from Samarkand toward the mountains that divide China and Turkestan. The winter was unusually cold; the desert was covered with snow, the Jaxarkes was frozen

over and the great horde crossed upon the ice. A blizzard of unprecedented severity compelled Tamerlane to stop at Otrar, 300 miles east of Samarkand, where he settled down to await milder weather. But exposure and fatigue had at last overcome the man whom nothing had been able to subdue. He took to his bed with a fever, and the icy water with which he tried to assuage his thirst brought on a chill from which he died during a furious storm that almost destroyed his silken tent.

When the tempest had subsided sufficiently to allow the troops to find the desert trail, they turned their faces homeward, bearing the body of the Emperor of Asia embalmed in the richest of spices, drenched in rose water, peacefully reposing in a casket of ebony, and they placed it with reverence in the mausoleum he had erected for himself at Samarkand. He was 69 years old at the date of his death; he reigned for thirty-three years as Emperor of Asia, and at least two-thirds of his entire life was occupied with active warfare for conquest. His battles are counted by the hundreds, and it is said that he was never defeated except by the angel of death.

Clements R. Markham, Secretary of the Royal Geographic Society of London, in a sketch of Tamerlane, says of his early life and ancestry:

"The most famous of Timour's ancestors was Karachar Nevian, the first convert to Islamism among the wild conquerors. He ruled with justice and moderation for many years, and established his own tribe of Berlas around the town of Kesh, near Samarkand. He became Sepah Salar or general of Zagatai's forces, and the title was made hereditary in his family; but his great-grandson, Teragay, who

was Timour's father, appears to have resigned the office, preferring the retirement of Kesh, and the society of learned men to the turbulent strife of the court of Samarkand.

"Teragay, the chief of the tribe of Berlas, is said to have been a man of distinguished piety and liberality, and he inherited an incalculable number of sheep and goats, cattle and servants. His wife, Tekina Khatoum, was virtuous and beautiful; and on the 8th of April, 1336, she gave birth to a son, at their encampment near the verdant walls of the delicious town of Kesh. This child was the future aspirant for universal empire.

"Timour was of the race of Toorkish wanderers, and he was of noble lineage, amongst a people who thought much of their descent. His countrymen lived in tents, loved the wandering lives of warlike shepherds better than the luxury and ease of cities; and, even in the countries which they had conquered, preferred an encampment in the open plains to a residence in the most splendid palaces. Brought up amidst such feelings, a youth of undoubted genius would naturally turn the whole force of his vigorous intellect to the achievement of military glory; but if Timour had not been a great conqueror, he would inevitably have become famous in some other way; and under any circumstances, he would have left the impress of his genius on the history of the Asiatic races. Timour was no vulgar conqueror, no ordinary man; his history, as displayed both in his own writings, and in those of his biographers, proves that, if not in his acts, certainly in his thoughts and opinions, he was in advance of his age and country.

"In his seventh year Timour's father took him by the hand, and led him to school, where he was placed in charge

of the Mollah Ali Beg. The Mollah, having written the Arabic alphabet on a plank, placed it before the child, who was much delighted, and considered the study as an amusement. In his ninth year he was taught the daily service of the mosque, and always read the ninety-first chapter of the Koran, called 'the Sun.'

"The child very early began to entertain an innate feeling of superiority, and a sort of presentiment of his future greatness. He himself afterwards described his recollection of this feeling, in quaint terms. 'At twelve years of age,' he says, 'I fancied I perceived in myself all the signs of greatness and wisdom, and whoever came to visit me, I received with great hauteur and dignity. At eighteen I became vain of my abilities, and was very fond of riding and hunting. I passed much of my time in reading the Koran, and playing at chess, and was also very fond of horsemanship.'

"Such was this young man's character when, in 1355, at the age of twenty, his father, Teragay, made over to him a number of tents, sheep, camels, and servants, and, in short, gave him a separate establishment. He began to long for some wider field of action, and to form plans of rebellion against what he considered the tyranny of the Zagatai sultan. He could not then find anyone to join him, but another turbulent spirit named Ameer Kurgan, one of the greatest chiefs of the tribe of Zagatai, defeated and killed the tyrant, and ruled the kingdom for ten years.

"Timour was deputed by his father to wait upon Ameer Kurgan, on business connected with the tribe of Berbas; and the new ruler took a liking for the young chief, and gave him his grand-daughter in marriage. This lady proved

a faithful and loving companion, following her lord in all his wild adventures, and sharing his dangers and misfortunes. Her name was Aljaz Turkhan Agha, daughter of Ameer Mashlah, grand-daughter of Ameer Krugan, and sister of Ameer Hosein.

"It was not, however, until 1358, when he was twenty-three years of age, that Timour's ambitious views began to take a wider range than the government of his native tribe of Berlas. In that year Ameer Kurgan determined to invade Khorassan, and gave the command of a thousand horses to young Timour, who was delighted with his new command. The men became extremely attached to him; he wrote a list of their names, and kept it folded in his pocket; and he was so elated by finding himself at the head of so many faithful followers, that he resolved, when the ruler of Khorassan was dispossessed, to grasp the sovereignty for himself.

"The ruler of Khorassan was expelled; and Timour was left in possession of Herat, while Ameer Kurgan returned to the Oxus, where he was treacherously murdered by two Toorkish chiefs. Timour was justly indignant at this base act, and, with his accustomed energy, collected his native tribe, and marched to Samarkand, where the victorious chiefs divided the whole empire amongst them.

"For the next seven years, from 1362 to 1369, when he was finally seated on the throne of Samarkand, Timour was engaged, first in expelling the invaders from his native land, and afterwards in a death struggle with his brother-in-law, Ameer Hosein."

"On the death of Timour his vast empire, which extended from the Volga River to the Bay of Bengal and from the

Mediterranean to the polar sea, soon fell to pieces. Yet it has been that the greatest and best princes that ever reigned in Mohammedan countries are to be found among his descendants. His son, Shah Rokh, reigned for more than forty years over Khorassan, which comprised a part of Persia, and a part of Afghanistan, and from 1397 to 1446 preserved peace and order in that country. He received his name because Timour was playing chess when he heard the news of his birth. He had just made the move which the Persians call Shah Rokh, checking the king with a castle. He was celebrated for his piety and liberality and for his courage and military ability. He made his capital at Herat, now a city of Afghanistan near the Persian boundary, and at that time it was a place of splendid appearance and large population. Ibrahim Meerza, the son of Shah Rokh, reigned for twenty years over Persia and encouraged literature and science, and built a famous university at Shiraz.

"Uleg Beg, another grandson of Timour, who succeeded him at Samarkand, was the greatest astronomer for many centuries and his astronomical tables are a wonder, considering the time when they were prepared. They are considered the most accurate of all that have come down to us from ancient times and they agree very well with those prepared by Tycho Brahe, the great Danish astronomer, who came to the University of Prague in 1599. They have been translated by John Greaves, the great English mathematician and astronomer.

"Hosein Meerza, who succeeded Shah Rokh, another grandson of Timour, was a great patron of art and literature, and left many splendid buildings.

"The Sultan Baber, Mogul of India, was, after Timour, the most famous of that dynasty, and his memoirs, which he wrote during the latter part of his life, compose one of the most curious and interesting works in literature. The Mogul Akbar, the enlightened and liberal emperor of India, was the most brilliant of Timour's descendants. Shah Jehan, his great-grandson, who built the Taj Mahal, the most beautiful building in the world, was also a genius. From his time there seems to be a decadence in the family until Nadir, the native prince, who was largely responsible for the Indian mutiny of 1858; he was the last of the Timourides."

There was published in the year 1780 an English translation by Joseph White Laudian, professor of Arabic in the University of Oxford, a remarkable manuscript, entitled: "Institutes, Political and Military, Written Originally in the Mogul Language, by the Great Timour, Improperly Called Tamerlane: First Translated into Persian by Abu Taulib Alhusseini, and Thence Into English, With Marginal Notes."

There are several biographies of Tamerlane, or Timour the Tartar, founder of the Mogul dynasty. The best known was written shortly after his death in 1404 in Persian by order of Ibrahim, the son of Shah Rokh, the son of Timour. It was translated into French in 1722 and served as the basis for several other histories. Another, entitled "Zaparnane, or Book of Victory," was compiled under Timour's own orders by a certain Nizamshmi, and is brought down to 1403, one year before his death. The original manuscript is in the British Museum.

Several unfriendly volumes were written about him by Persians and other enemies during the generation following

his death, and they have been preserved in the libraries of Europe, although, strange to say, nothing in the way of history or biography of his time, or any other time for that matter, can be found in Samarkand, his capital, which he made the centre of learning and literature during his reign. All culture seems to have been lost during the century following his death, when his great empire was broken into fragments by the contentions of his descendants.

Edward Gibbon, in his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Vol. XVII, Chapter LXV, gives an eloquent review of the character and career of the greatest of all Asiatics, and says:

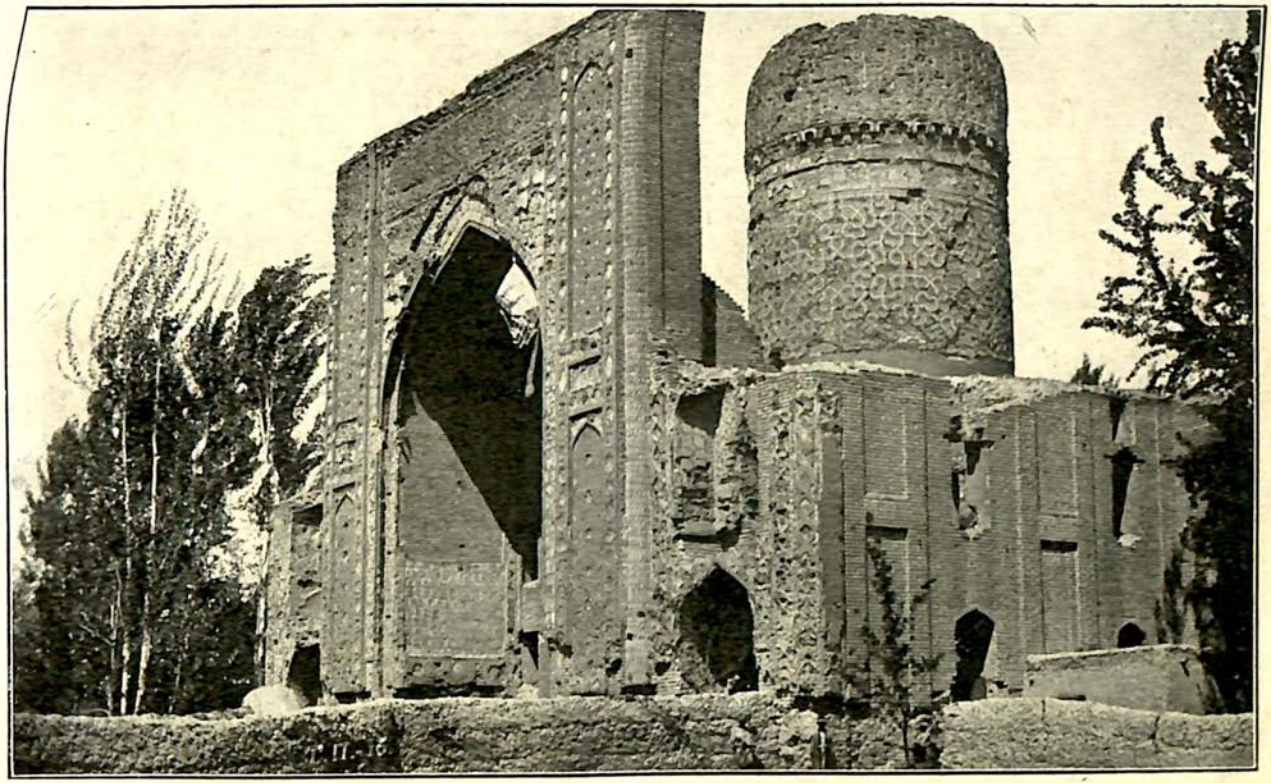
"The fame of Timour has pervaded the East and the West; his posterity is still invested with the imperial titles, and the admiration of his subjects, who revered him almost as a deity, may be justified in some degree by the praise or confession of his bitterest enemies.

"Although he was lame of a hand and foot, his form and stature were not unworthy of his rank, and his vigorous health, so essential to himself and to the world, was corroborated by temperance and exercise. In his familiar discourse he was grave and modest, and, if he was ignorant of the Arabic language, he spoke with fluency and elegance the Persian and Turkish idioms. It was his delight to converse with the learned on topics of history and science, and the amusement of his leisure hours was the game of chess, which he improved or corrupted with new refinements. . . . In the government of a vast empire he stood alone and absolute, without a rebel to oppose his power, a favourite to seduce his affections, or a minister to mislead his judgment. It was his firmest maxim that, whatever

might be the consequence, the word of the prince should never be disputed or recalled. . . . His sons and grandsons, of whom Timour left six-and-thirty at his decease, were his first and most submissive subjects. . . . To maintain the harmony of authority and obedience, to chastise the proud, to protect the weak, to reward the deserving, to banish vice and idleness from his dominions, to secure the traveller and merchants, to restrain the depredations of the soldier, to cherish the labours of the husbandman, to encourage industry and learning, and, by an equal and moderate assessment, to increase the revenue without increasing the taxes, are, indeed, the duties of a prince; but, in the discharge of these duties, he finds an ample and immediate recompense. Timour might boast that, at his accession to the throne, Asia was the prey of anarchy and rapine, whilst under his prosperous monarchy a child, fearless and unhurt, might carry a purse of gold from the east to the west. Such was his confidence of merit that from this reformation he derived excuses for his victories and his title to universal dominion."

The most interesting account of the splendour of Tamerlane's court at Samarkand is found in a "Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour, at Samarkand, A.D. 1403-6." This is the oldest Spanish narrative of travel known and was written in the earliest dawn of Spanish literature, in the reign of King Henry III, who was a contemporary of Richard II, and Henry IV, of England. From a historical point of view it is exceedingly important, almost equal to the narratives of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville.

Henry III of Castile sent embassies to all the princes



TOMB OF TAMERLANE'S GRANDFATHER, NEAR THE CITY OF SAMARKAND.

of Christendom to gather information respecting their affairs and to collect knowledge that might be useful for the good government of his own country. Two of his ambassadors were witnesses of the battle of Angora, in which Timour overcame Bayazid, the second sultan of Turkey, in the year 1402, and upon their return to Spain took with them two Christian ladies who had been rescued by Tamerlane from the harem of their captor. One was a Hungarian and the other a Greek. Both married grandees of the Spanish court and became the mothers of eminent men.

Henry III became so much interested in the affairs of Turkestan that he sent a second embassy to the court of Tamerlane, of which Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, a grandee of Madrid, was the chief, and Clavijo wrote a description of all the places through which he passed from Cadiz to Samarkand, where he spent several months as a guest of the great Tartar. He gives a minute account of his experience and introduces much historical information concerning lands which he did not visit and many interesting stories of what he heard as well as what he saw. His narrative is the most complete, and doubtless the most accurate account we have of the reign of the Tartar conqueror and the splendour of his capital. Although familiar with the incomparable architecture of the Moors at Granada, Cordova, and Seville, he confesses his amazement at the magnificence of the barbarian city in the deserts of Asia. The mosques and colleges were thronged with scholars, the palaces were surrounded by gardens "as lovely as paradise, in which thousands of pavilions, rose-coloured, azure and snow-white, stood glittering in the sun."

He tells us that Tamerlane and his courtiers dined at tables laden with dishes of pure gold; they drank from goblets enamelled with rubies; their food was borne to them on silver trays so heavy that it took three men to carry them; the guests were served with pyramids of meat and countless jars of precious wine, and when the emir was pleased with his surroundings he showered coins of gold and jewelled rings upon his guests. Nothing amazed the Spaniard more than the pavilion of the queen, where she dined upon a table of gold, the top of which, he says, was a single emerald. It was placed under a tree similar to the one described in the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp. The trunk was of silver, its boughs and branches were of gold, its fruits were rubies, pearls, diamonds, and sapphires. No fable of mythology was ever so extravagant in its descriptions of splendour as the stories which those grandees sent home to the Spanish court. While much of their rhapsody must have been exaggeration, their enthusiasm was no doubt justified.

He says that Tamerlane had a ring set with a stone of extraordinary lustre, which, however, grew dull when any falsehood was told in his presence. Clavijo told some tall stories concerning the grandeur of Spain, which he admits "were not strictly true, but in a metaphorical sense," and he was very much surprised to notice that the gem preserved its bright colour. Perhaps it might have blushed at some of the accounts he gives of the splendour and extravagance of Tamerlane's court, although his statements are confirmed by other writers.

Upon their arrival at Kesh, about thirty miles from Samarkand, they found "Timour Beg seated in a portal in front of

the entrance of a beautiful palace, and he was sitting on the ground," Clavijo relates. "Before him there was a fountain, which threw up the water very high, and in it there were many red apples. The lord was seated cross-legged on a silken embroidered carpet among round pillows. He was dressed in a robe of silk, with a high white hat on his head, on the top of which was a spiral ruby with pearls and precious stones around it." He continues:

"As soon as the ambassadors and many others who had come from distant countries were seated in order, they brought much meat, boiled and roasted and dressed in other ways, and roasted horses; and they placed these on very large, round pieces of stamped leather. When the lord called for meat the people dragged it to him on these pieces of leather, so great was its weight; and as soon as it was within twenty paces of him carvers came, who cut it up, kneeling on the leather, and put the pieces in basins of gold and silver. The most honourable piece was a haunch of a horse, and they placed parts of it in ten cups of gold and silver. Then some men came with soup and they sprinkled salt over it and put a little in each dish with sauce; and they took some very thin cakes of corn, doubled them up four times and placed one over each cup or basin of meat. And after that there came fruit, melons, grapes, and nectarines. They gave them drink out of silver and golden jugs, particularly sugar and cream, a pleasant beverage, which they made in the summer time."

This house and garden where the lord received the ambassadors was called "Heart's Delight," and Clavijo continues: "This garden had a very lofty and handsome entrance made of bricks and adorned with tiles of blue and

gold arranged in various patterns. There were many tents and awnings of red cloth and various coloured silks. In the centre of the garden there was a very beautiful house built in the shape of a cross and very richly adorned with ornaments. In the middle of it there were three chambers with beds and carpets, and the walls were covered with glazed tiles. Opposite the entrance, in the largest of the chambers, was a gold table as high as a man and three arms abroad, on the top of which there was a bed of silk cloth, embroidered with gold, and here the lord was seated. The walls were hung with rose-coloured silk cloths ornamented with plates of silver gilt set with emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones.

"In the centre of the house opposite the door were two gold tables, each standing on four legs, and the table and the legs were all one; and seven golden phials stood upon them, two of which were set with large pearls, emeralds, and turquoises, and each one had a ruby near the mouth. There were also six round golden cups, each of which was set with large, round, clear pearls inside and in the centre of them was a ruby two fingers broad and of a brilliant colour.

"This pavilion was so large and high that from a distance it looked like a castle, and it was a wonderful thing to see," he exclaims.

The ambassador describes other tents made of red velvet, embroidered with golden threads, and does not seem to have sufficient words at his command to express his wonder and admiration. The splendour of the scene, however, was violated by several acts of cruelty committed by Tamerlane in the presence of his guests. On one occasion, he says,

"justice was inflicted upon a magistrate called Dina, who was the greatest officer in all the land of Samarkand. Timour had left him in the city as his magistrate when he departed for six or seven months, during which time this man had neglected his duty, so the lord ordered him to be hanged, and confiscated all his goods.

"Another piece of justice was inflicted upon a great man who had been left in charge of 3,000 horses when the lord departed. Because he could not produce all he was hanged, although he pleaded that he could produce not only 3,000 but 6,000 horses if the lord would give him time. In this and other ways the lord administered justice. He also ordered justice to be executed upon certain butchers who had sold meat for more than it was worth and upon shoemakers who had cheated the people by giving them leather of a poor quality, and other traders were fined for selling their goods at a high price. The custom is that when a great man is put to death he is hanged, but the meaner sort are beheaded."

Clavijo laments the terrible drunkenness he saw at court, of which women as well as men were guilty, and says: "It is not considered respectful to the sultan for anyone to partake of his wine without getting so drunk that he could drink no more of it, and the servants carried the drunken men from the presence of their master. The women also became so intoxicated that they fell unconscious."

Clavijo describes the several wives of Tamerlane and their costumes, which must have been gorgeous. Their headdresses were covered with pearls, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, and it required fifteen ladies to carry the train of the chief wife, which was of red velvet trimmed with

gold lace, "so heavy that the women could scarcely lift it." He also describes the apartments in which the queen received him and his companions, sitting, like Tamerlane, upon the top of a golden table. Her tent was of red cloth outside, and "part of the inside was lined with sable, which is the most precious skin in the world, and each skin is worth 14 or 15 ducats (a ducat was worth $4) in this land, and in other countries its value is much greater."

Clavijo also describes games and sports with which the people of Samarkand amused themselves, and in which elephants and other wild animals were used.

"The city," he says, "is very rich in merchandise and the business is very large." He says that Tamerlane brought home with him from his campaigns 150,000 slaves, most skilful mechanics and artisans, weavers of silk, potters and makers of earthen ware, silversmiths and others "skilled in making engines of war."

From his accounts Samarkand must have been as luxurious and the people as profligate as those of Babylon, and the feasts of Tamerlane must have surpassed in magnificence those of Belshazzar.

In the university library at Heidelberg are ninety-six neatly written sheets of manuscript about 8 inches long by 6 inches broad, bound in leather, with bronze corner plates and clasps, the upper board bearing a portrait in gold relief of the elector, Otto Heinrich, and the date 1558. Another date, 1443, probably the year in which the manuscript was written, appears on the title page, which is beautifully ornamented with illustrations from the Old and New Testaments. This volume was included in the Palatine library that was captured and carried off by Maximilian, Duke of

Bavaria, to Pope Gregory XV, as a trophy of the Catholic triumphs and for nearly two hundred years occupied an honoured place in the library at the Vatican. After the general peace of 1815 Pope Pius VII restored the collection to the University of Heidelberg.

This manuscript contains "The Recollections of the Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1396-1427."

Schiltberger, it seems, when a boy about 16, left his home near the city of Munich and found his way into Turkey, where he was made a servant or slave of the Sultan Bajazet, and accompanied him in his campaigns for twelve years. At the battle of Nicopolis he was captured by Tamerlane's forces, was spared on account of his good looks, and remained as a body-servant for six years with his captor, whom he followed in his campaigns in India, Persia, and Syria and was with him at the time of his death at Otrar in 1405.

He then fell into the hands of Shah Rokh, a son of Tamerlane, and continued his wanderings until 1424 or 1425, when he managed to escape and make his way back to his home in Munich, where he arrived some time in the year 1417, "offering thanks to Almighty God for his escape from the infidel people and their wicked religion, and for having preserved him from the risk of perdition of body and soul."

Schiltberger's knowledge of the world made him a valuable accession to the court at Munich. He was attached to the staff of the grand chamberlain of Albrecht III, and was ultimately elevated to the nobility. The Schiltbergers have ever since been included in the peerage of Bavaria.

So much interest was exhibited in the narrative of his adventures, as he related them at court, that he was persuaded to commit his recollections to paper and the original manuscript is in the university library at Heidelberg, as I have already stated. It has been published in printed form several times in German and French, and an English translation was made for the Hakluyt Society of London in 1859 by Commander J. Buchan Telfer, R. N.

Schiltberger gives a graphic account of his experience in the train of Tamerlane, whom he describes as a man of imposing presence and imperial manners; although his accounts of his cruelty and mercilessness toward his enemies and prisoners captured in war are frightful. For example, he tells of one occasion where Tamerlane captured the city of Weyasit, after a siege of twenty-one days.

"When Tamerlane took the city," the narrative states, "the governor begged that he would not shed their blood. To this he consented, but buried them all alive. There were also 9,000 virgins taken into captivity by Tamerlane to his own country."

At another time, in a war with the Turks, Tamerlane captured the city of Damascus and the narrative continues: "After he had taken the city, there came to him the Geit — that is as much as to say a bishop — and fell at his feet, and begged mercy for himself and his priests. Tamerlane ordered that he should go with his priests into the temple; so the priests took their wives, their children, and many others, into the temple for protection, until there were 30,000 young and old. Now Tamerlane gave orders that, when the temple was full, the people inside should be shut up in it. This was done. Then wood was placed around

the temple, and he ordered it to be ignited, and they all perished in the temple. Then he ordered that each one of his soldiers should bring to him the head of a man. This was done, and it took three days; then with these heads were constructed three towers, and the city was pillaged."

In several accounts of the life of Tamerlane it is represented that when he captured Bajazet, the sultan of Turkey, at the battle of Nicopolis, he placed his prisoner in an iron cage and for several years thereafter carried him around in that way, as a gratification to his pride and as a warning to his enemies. This sensational story has also been denied as a falsehood, originating with a Persian writer who is plainly prejudiced and vindictive in his disposition toward Tamerlane. As Schiltberger was captured at the same battle with his royal master, Bajazet, and remained at the headquarters of Tamerlane continuously for six years after, it is significant that he makes no mention of the matter in his narrative. He certainly would have done so if the story is true.

CHAPTER XII

THE MEMOIRS OF TIMOUR THE TARTAR

IT IS, however, from the memoirs of Tamerlane himself that we get the best idea of his character and the most accurate account of certain events in his life, which have been the subject of controversy for four centuries. This manuscript makes an octavo volume of 457 pages. It begins with his birth and is carried through to the year before his death. The manuscript was found about the middle of the eighteenth century in the library of Jafir, hakim, or governor, of Yemen, Arabia, and there is no reason to doubt its genuineness. There have been several translations, first into Persian and from Persian into English.

As the translator says: "These memoirs carry with them the strongest proof that he wrote for posterity only. He gives you that which he alone had the power to give, the secret springs and motives which influenced his conduct in the various political and military transactions of his life, the arts by which he governed as well as the power by which he conquered. He acknowledges his weaknesses, honestly owns his errors, describes the difficulties in which he was occasionally involved by those errors, and the policy by which he surmounted and overcame those difficulties. The noble simplicity of diction, the plain and unadorned egotism that runs through the whole of the 'Institutes,' are peculiarities which mark their originality and their authenticity also.

"There is ever a solemnity and a kind of sacred authority in the instructions which a dying parent delivers to his offspring," continues the translator in his preface. "When the lord of the East laid down his sceptre, which he had long and well supported, he did not leave to his successor a verbal injunction, a short lesson of morality, which might soon be forgotten amid the cares and pleasures of a court, but bestowed with his empire a gift more valuable, the art to preserve it. In the leisure of his declining years he had thrown a retrospective eye over the scenes of a long and varied life, and then committed to writing for the perpetual instruction of his imperial descendants those rules of government and those measures of policy which he himself had invariably followed, and from his history he collected the several plans he had formed and their success. To these he added his omens, which are omitted in this publication, because, however consistent they might have been when they were written with the manners and religion of the East, and whatever political purposes they might have tended to promote, the present age wisely disregards such superstitions."

It is hoped that Dr. Ross, who is soon to make a new translation from the original manuscript of the "Institutes" of Tamerlane, will not be so cautious as Dr. White, the first translator, for I do not think that any harm would befall the present generation if they were to know Timour's interpretation of signs and omens that were observed by him.

The preface to the translation continues: "Timour was always attended by several learned and able men, whose sole employment was to keep a sort of historical journal of all transactions as they occurred, both military and civil. They were directed to adhere minutely to the truth

in their relation of the most trifling facts, and they were still more particularly enjoined to observe the strictest impartiality and accuracy in their narratives of the conduct and actions of the emperor himself. These historical journals, if they may be so called, were from time to time read in his presence and in the presence of his ministers and officers and of the learned. They were compared with and corrected by each other, by the emperor himself, and by such of his officers as had a personal knowledge of the transactions therein related. It must be allowed that this was no bad way of collecting authentic materials for a history of a mighty governor governing an empire.

"The only work bearing the least resemblance to the 'Institutes' of Timour, which has fallen under my observation, is the history or commentaries of the Sultan Baber, written by himself. Baber was descended from Timour in the fifth degree; about eighty years elapsed between the death of Timour and the birth of Baber. The earlier part of his life much resembles that of his great predecessor, and his abilities in the field and in the cabinet, his fortitude in distress, his activity and courage when surrounded with difficulties and danger, and the glory and success with which his enterprises were finally crowned, make the resemblance between these two princes still more striking. Like Timour, Baber wrote an accurate history of his own life and actions in the Turkish language, which, though by no means equal to the admirable composition of his renowned ancestor, is a work of infinite merit."

The Mogul emperor, Humayun, son of Baber, son of Omar Shykl, son of Abu Said, son of Muhammed Mirza, son of Myran Hussyn, son of Timour, also wrote his memoirs,

which were translated and published in London by Major Charles Stewart in 1832.

Akbar, the greatest of the moguls of India, was the son of Humayun, and the grandfather of Shah Jehan, who built the Taj Mahal, the most beautiful of all buildings, at Agra, India, as a tomb for his beloved wife. Shah Jehan was the grandson of Tamerlane in the eighth generation.

In the Bodley Library at the University of Oxford is a collection of 178 portraits of the moguls, including one of Tamerlane, which was obtained in India by Alexander Pope in 1737, and presented to that institution. Concerning the portrait of Tamerlane, the donor says: "It is perhaps the only one extant on which any dependence for genuineness may be reasonably had."

The political, military and moral maxims found in the "Institutes" of Tamerlane, are as full of wisdom and philosophy as the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, and were household words in the courts of the grand moguls of India, his descendants. Tamerlane was doubtless illiterate from our standard, but wise in his generation. He was born a nomad shepherd, although his family came from famous stock. He probably never went to school a day in his life, although he is said to have been able to speak in three languages — Arabic, Persian, and Turki. But he had a brilliant intellect and a long course of instruction in that greatest of universities, human experience. When he reached a degree of power and authority which enabled him to do so, he surrounded himself with men of learning, and, although he destroyed Bagdad and Damascus, which were the centres of literary life and scholastic research in those days, the mosques and colleges which he afterward erected

at Samarkand were worthy rivals of the best institutions in those ancient cities. Owing to his liberality Samarkand, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, was probably the centre of civilization.

This Tartar warrior desired to be remembered by posterity as a wise king and a patron of learning, and he wrote these memoirs late in his life because he desired to leave a memorial of himself which would place him upon a level with the most intelligent of the sovereigns he had overthrown. His sons inherited from him unusual talent, which in some cases amounted to genius, and they founded an empire in India which lasted to our own time.

In 1437 Uleg Beg, a grandson of Tamerlane, built at Samarkand the greatest observatory in the world, and with his own hands prepared astronomical tables which are the wonder of modern astronomers. The thirty-eight years this cultured prince occupied the throne of his father was the golden age of Central Asia. He gathered about him the most famous men of science of that time and his artistic taste was displayed in buildings which still stand. Other of Tamerlane's descendants were also men of learning and patrons of science and art and literature, and by their works it is evident that they desired to be so known.

The "Institutes" of Tamerlane doubtless attracted great attention in the Moslem world when they first appeared, and were the subject of much comment in 1780, when they were first translated into English; but, like many good things, they were buried under a flood of publications and have been forgotten. Their revival would be opportune even at this day.

Among the political maxims which Tamerlane handed

down to his successors for their guidance in governing the empire he had established over two-thirds of the continent of Asia, are the following:

"In conducting the concerns of government, take by the hand four assistants: Deliberation, Counsel, Vigilance, and Circumspection.

"Those are worthy only to be counsellors who steadfastly adhere to what they say and do.

"A friend in all places cometh to use.

"One obstinately resolved on resistance who is dangerous may often be won by indirect commendation, which he may hear.

"Unless it be quite necessary, a prince should not displace officers of his own promotion.

"Since God is one and hath no partner, therefore the ruler over the land must be one only.

"It is good to pardon, to be liberal, to be merciful; but it is better to be just.

"Those who are disposed to hurt others should not be admitted to intimacy.

"A prince must be just and good as well as valiant.

"Not only good and useful men are to be rewarded; but enemies and traitors on submission can be pardoned and made useful, if their hearts can be won. Especially, if they are brave and sagacious men.

"Teachers of the Divine Law should furnish an example of their precepts.

"No prince can be strong and secure unless he is religious.

"Plenty and population are the main ends in a government.

"A prince should hear advice from everyone, but he

should so attend to none as to make them equal or superior to himself in wisdom or in authority.

"Too great a share of government should be trusted to none, but the power of every officer, even the most inferior, should be absolute over all below him.

"Ministers should not be condemned except on fair trial and clear proof, because many seek their ruin, either envying them or plotting against their sovereign.

"He who forgetteth his duty once should be trusted no more.

"He who in the hour of trial searcheth after excuses, or would transfer until to-morrow the business of to-day, let him be held in contempt.

"If a good servant be unjustly put to shame or mortification, let it be repaired promptly.

"When one who hath forsaken his master returns of his own accord, let him be received with kindness, but not honour."

These are samples of the wisdom of the great Tamerlane in political policy, and in his "Institutes" he gives a similar series for the guidance of his successors in military affairs. He also gives a series of theological and religious maxims, which are equally sagacious. For example, he says:

"Victory proceedeth not from the greatness of armies, nor defeat from inferiority of numbers, for conquest is obtained by divine favour and skilful measures.

"I opened the holy book (the Koran) for an omen, and this sacred verse came forth as a sign, 'How oft do the weak vanquish the powerful by the permission of Almighty God.'

"The faith of force is not that which worketh by love.

Imitate thy benevolent Creator that he may increase his mercies to thee.

"Thus I formed measures and designs for the reduction of kingdoms, for the obtainment of empire, for defeating armies, for circumventing enemies, for making of friends, of foes, and for coming in among friends and enemies."

Throughout the entire narrative are frequent references to his dependence upon divine guidance and his faith in the efficacy of prayer. For example, he says: "And I, in that night on the top of that hill, was employed in humiliations and supplications to the throne of Almighty God; and between sleeping and waking I heard a voice, as of some one saying to me: 'Timour, victory and conquest and triumph are thine.' And when the morning broke, I prayed with my people and mounted my horse and assaulted the enemy in four different places."

He gives a minute account of the plans of his principal battles, which were designed in detail in advance and explained carefully to each of his commanders. The strategic movements designed by him are considered by high military authorities as equal to those of Napoleon. He justified his policy of conquest thus:

"And behold, I at all times thought there was naught more worthy the valour of princes than the conquering of kingdoms and empires and the waging of holy wars with infidels and unbelievers."

After he had conquered all Asia, it was Tamerlane's intention to invade Europe. He was urged to the invasion of the Chinese Empire by national honour and religious zeal. Gibbon says: "The torrents which he had shed of Mussulman blood could be expiated only by an equal destruc-

tion of infidels. And, as he now stood at the gates of Paradise, he might best secure his glorious entrance by demolishing the idols of China, founding mosques in every city, establishing the profession of faith in one God and his prophet, Mohammed.

"From the Irtish and the Volga to the Persian Gulf, from the Ganges to Damascus and the Grecian Archipelago, Asia was in the hand of Timour; his armies were invincible, his ambition was boundless and his zeal might aspire to conquer and convert the Christian nations of the West, which already trembled at his name. The fears and fancy of nations ascribed to the ambitious Tamerlane a new design of vast and romantic conquest; a design of subduing Egypt and Africa, marching from the Nile to the Atlantic Ocean, entering Europe by the Straits of Gibraltar, and after imposing his yoke upon the kingdoms of Christendom, of returning home by the deserts of Russia and Tartary."

The "Institutes" justify this apprehension. He seems to have been convinced that he was the chosen of God to extend the faith of Islam, and says: "And when I sought an omen in the holy book, this sacred verse always came forth: 'O prophet! fight with the infidels and the unbelievers!' And I placed a helmet of steel upon my head and I clothed myself in the armour of David; I hung a scimitar of Missur by my side and I sat on the throne of war."

Timour had a suit of armour, which he believed that David, King of Israel, had forged with his own hands. It was presented to him by Ipocrates, the Christian king of Georgia, when he invaded that country. After Ipocrates had been conquered and his kingdom annexed to the empire

of Tamerlane he accepted the faith of Islam and became a great favourite with the conqueror.

"And among the rules which I established for the support of my glory and empire, the first was this: That I promote the worship of Almighty God, and at all times and at all places support the true faith," he said.

Timour conquered twenty-seven independent kingdoms and carried the crowns to Samarkand, his capital. He commanded his armies in thirty-five campaigns and his biographers insist that he never lost a battle. He burned hundreds of cities and towns, and erected upon the ruins of Bagdad a pyramid of 90,000 human heads; and yet he says that he never fought a battle except "to deliver the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor."

"I did not cause any one person to suffer for the guilt of another," he says again. "I drew to me the obedient of the people of God by complacency, by mercy, and by indulgence. And I ever adhered to equity and justice. I retired far from cruelty and oppression; I never gave way to the thirst for revenge, nor did I ever satiate my resentment on anyone. Those who injured me I delivered over to the justice of the Almighty. And to those who had envied my fortune and who had endeavoured to subvert my power, I conducted myself with such kindness and generosity that they were confounded at my goodness and sunk under the sense of their unworthiness."

That is Tamerlane's opinion of himself, but it is not confirmed by the judgment of his contemporaries. He was undoubtedly the greatest of all the sovereigns and soldiers Asia has ever produced, but was brutal and barbarous in warfare. Gibbon, the great historian, says:

"On the throne of Samarkand he displayed his magnificent power, listened to the complaints of the people, distributed a just measure of punishment and rewards, employed his riches in the architecture of palaces and temples and gave audience to the ambassadors of Egypt, Arabia, India, Tartary, Russia, and Spain. . . . Whatsoever might be the blessings of his administration, they evaporated with his life. To reign rather than to govern was the ambition of his children and grandchildren, the enemies of each other and of the people. A fragment of his empire was upheld with some glory by Shah Rokh, his youngest son, but after his decease the scene was again involved in darkness and blood, and before the end of a century Transoxiana and Persia were trampled by the Uzbeks from the north and the Turkomans of the black and white sheep. The race of Timour would have been extinct, if an hero, his descendant in the fifth degree, had not fled before the Uzbek arms to the conquest of Hindostan. His successors (the great moguls) extended their sway from the mountains of Cashmir to Cape Cormorin, and from Candahar to the Gulf of Bengal. Since the reign of Aurungzebe their empire has been dissolved, their treasures of Delhi have been rifled by a Persian robber, and the riches of their kingdoms is now possessed by a company of Christian merchants of a remote island in the northern ocean" (the East India Company).

The memoirs of Tamerlane contain a graphic story of a wedding at Samarkand, in the year 1402, as told by an emperor — he who was the greatest warrior in the history of Asia and one of the greatest statesmen.

The historian Gibbon, in his "Roman Empire," speaks

of this wedding festival as "an act of religion as well as paternal tenderness, and the pomp of the ancient caliphs was revived in the nuptials. They were celebrated in the gardens of Canizhul, decorated with innumerable tents and pavilions, which displayed the luxury of a great city and the spoils of a victorious camp. Whole forests were cut down to supply fuel for the kitchens; the plain was spread with pyramids of meat and vases of every liquor, to which thousands of guests were courteously invited. . . . The public joy was testified by illuminations and masquerades, the trades of Samarkand passed in review, and every trade was emulous to execute some quaint device, some marvelous pageant, with the materials of their peculiar art. After the marriage contracts had been ratified by the cadis the bridegrooms and the brides retired to their nuptial chambers; nine times, according to the Asiatic fashion, they were dressed and undressed, and at each change of apparel pearls and rubies were showered on their beds and contemptuously abandoned to their attendants. A general indulgence was proclaimed; every law was relaxed, every pleasure was allowed; the people were free, the sovereign was idle, and the historian of Timour may well remark that, after devoting fifty years to the attainment of empire, the only happy period of his life was the two months in which he ceased to exercise his power."

Tamerlane seems to have been so proud of this display and to have had so good an opinion of himself that he indulged in a rhapsody over the festival, and wrote a detailed account of the event for his memoirs. It has been said that no man can adequately describe either a battle or a ball, but Timour the Tartar, "The Scourge of God,"

"The Conqueror of Asia," has produced as graphic a picture of a wedding festival as the most accomplished pen painter of this age. His account of the event in his memoirs is as follows:

"When the tents and seraperdahs, or royal tents, were erected and properly decorated with magnificent furniture, with carpets of costly silk, with golden thrones and chairs of state, with vessels of gold and silver, rich cups of agate and crystal, I (the emir), in a fortunate hour, repaired to the royal tent, which was built for the occasion, and supported by twelve poles, richly inlaid with gold and silver, and adorned with the utmost magnificence. Here I seated myself on the throne of empire, whilst my sons and grandsons, my emirs and sirdars of high renown, each took their respective places, surrounding me on all sides. Next I directed the seyids, descendants of the Prophet, the learned men of the realm, the kazis, muftis, and others to take up their proper places in this illustrious assembly.

"In the same manner the ambassadors of foreign powers from Kipchak, from Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor, from Hindoostan and Europe, were allotted their respective stations; next the commanders of hazarjats, or regiments of a thousand; those of the sadjats, of a hundred; the magistrates of the city of Samarkand, and judges of the police from different parts of the empire, were introduced, clothed in royal khalats or dresses of honour, and took their places accordingly. Before the door of the royal tent were drawn up the elephants brought from India, of enormous stature and decorated with the most magnificent trappings of silk, velvet, and curious embroidery, with howdahs flaming with gold and silver, and chains of the same precious metal.

"In order to render this festival as splendid as possible, I had collected from every part of the empire the most skilful artificers of every kind. These, with the assistance of the different companies of tradesmen within the city of Samarkand, and those of the imperial camp, such as jewellers, goldsmiths, masons, carpenters, bricklayers, embroiderers, weavers, etc., had erected upward of 100 chartakis or pavilions, supported by four poles each, and containing as many doors to each. The insides of these pavilions were elegantly decorated with carpets of the richest kind, embroidered with gold and silver, with velvets and the finest stuffs from China and Europe, and with magnificent chairs. Each tent was ornamented with the particular badge of the artificer who erected it; they were likewise furnished with paintings done in the most exquisite taste and exhibited within and without a most glorious spectacle, such as the eye of mortal had never before beheld, and which caused the spectator to place the finger of astonishment within his mouth on beholding.

"To enhance the pleasure of this august assembly performers of all kinds and descriptions had been collected from far and near; mimics, buffoons, singers, dancers, and every profession which contributes to the amusement and entertainment of the great. When this festival, than which the eye had not beheld one more splendid nor the ear heard of one equal, became complete, I, in a fortunate moment, directed men learned in the stars and skilled in the motions of the heavenly bodies to extract from the almanacs, and by the astrolabe and quadrant to inspect the situation of the propitious and unfortunate stars, that they might with precision draw forth a happy moment for the cele-

bration of the nuptials of my beloved grandsons, who had long since been betrothed to virgins dwelling in the asylum of chastity. Which being done, I ordered that the ceremony should be performed agreeably to the established faith of Mohammed and the ordinances of our holy religion.

"These things being performed, a prayer for the health and prosperity of my illustrious progeny was recited in public by the venerable Shaikh-ad-din Mohammed Reza, an iman of much celebrity; likewise the Mulayi Silah-ad-din. The Kazi-al-Kazat of Samarkand, a person eminent for his piety and learning, bestowed his benediction in public upon the fortunate bridegrooms. After the marriage ceremony had been conducted, agreeably to the ordinance of Hanifah, I commanded the drums and trumpets and the imperial music to strike up, after which trays filled with gold and silver, with jewels and precious stones of all sorts, were brought forth, and I directed the Nisarl to be performed, which was done agreeably to established custom, and a profusion of wealth was poured upon the heads of this august assembly.

"When the marriage was concluded I ordered a sumptuous repast to be served, at which the Amir Zadahs, or princes of the blood, the Orma, or nobles, Nuwinan, the foreign ambassadors, and all the nobility assembled. A variety of gold and silver dishes, filled with the most costly viands, were served to the assembly; nor were there wanting wines of the first quality, presented by cup-bearers of graceful shapes.

"At this banquet, likewise, were assembled companies of the most eminent singers in the empire, and dancers of approved skill, to the number of many thousands, who

by their excellence in their respective professions afforded delight to the spectators. Among the foremost of these performers was Khoaja Abdulaziz, who bore the palm of preëminence from his competitors, and whose equal is not to be found on earth. There came likewise reciters of poetry and story-tellers from all parts of my dominions to this solemnity, and among them were Turks, Moguls, Chinese, and Russians.

"When the hearts of this august company became warm with wine and good cheer I ordered the khalats to be brought forth and distributed, first to the Amir Zadahs, or princes of the blood, the Orma, the nobility, the Nuwinan, and the learned men of the realms, foreign ambassadors and others. These khalats consisted of dresses of gold and silver tissue; silks and velvets of various kinds and patterns; embroidered caps and sashes for the waist; scimitars inlaid with gold and set in precious stones; horses from the best breeds of Arabia and Persia, with saddles and housings of gold and silver — in short, such a profusion of wealth was distributed on this auspicious occasion that no one present had any care for the remainder of his days; nor on this occasion were the poor and needy forgotten, for I directed my almoners to provide for them in the most ample manner and to furnish them with all things necessary, both of apparel and provision.

"When the repast was finished, the whole company changed their dresses, during which ceremony the musicians and dancers exerted themselves to charm by their melodious voices and the gracefulness of their actions. At length, the fortunate moment being arrived, the Amir Zadahs who had been married each returned to his respective

mahal or palace, which had been prepared for the occasion with the utmost magnificence and splendour, after which I rose and retired into the apartments of privacy, where I was met on my entrance by the whole of the sultanas of inviolable chastity, who, wishing me joy on this auspicious festival, showered upon my head trays full of the most precious jewels.

"In the morning I waited upon the Amir Zadahs (bride and groom) and paid them compliments and congratulations on their marriage, wishing them a long and prosperous life. I directed the Nisar to be performed a second time, and was followed by the sultanas, the Orma, the Nuwinan, the whole of the nobility, and the great men of the city of Samarkand. When the ceremony was performed I returned to the royal gargah (or imperial tent) and seated myself on the throne of empire; and having called the ambassadors who had arrived from Egypt, Syria, Europe, the Desert of Kapchak, Mogulestan, Hindoostan, and Rum (Asia Minor), I directed them to be invested with khalats of the utmost magnificence and presented them with fine horses, with embroidered housings, with scimitars inlaid with jewels, with golden poniards and caps and sashes of the finest cashmere wool. And in honour of these auspicious marriages I commanded the festival to be held for two months in that agreeable and delicious valley, where everything that art and nature could afford was introduced, and the whole time was a season of mirth, joy and gladness.

"At the conclusion every one was dismissed with suitable presents, and I then turned my thoughts to the management of the affairs of my empire and my long meditated project of conquering the Kingdom of Khota (China)."

CHAPTER XIII

SAMARKAND, THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF ASIA

THIS ancient capital of Central Asia reminded me of a crippled giant fallen helpless by the wayside, his limbs too feeble to allow him to rise and his fingers so palsied with age that he cannot wipe the dust from his sightless eyes. There was a time — perhaps several distinct epochs separated by centuries — when Samarkand was as much the source of power and influence in the affairs of the world as London is to-day; when its architecture was as much admired as that of Paris or Vienna; when its scholarship was as famous as that of Athens; and its ecclesiastical prominence as great as that of Rome. Its universities were sought by students from every corner of the earth, like those of Germany are to-day, and pilgrims came from every part of the Mohammedan world to worship at its shrines. But all that glory has departed, and for five centuries Samarkand has been dying. Its former greatness is unknown to or has been forgotten by its present population.

The priests who officiate in the splendid temples, and the professors in the colleges could not tell me the names of the architects and disputed about the years of their erection. The present generation cannot even read the inscriptions over their portals, and they do not know where the palace of Tamerlane was located. All the imposing structures that once gave Samarkand its reputation as the finest city

in Asia have either disappeared or are in an advanced stage of decay and dilapidation. They have been almost entirely stripped of the adornments that made them famous, and the earthquakes that occur every few years diminish the number of turquoise and azure domes and the dimensions of the enamelled walls, and increase the heaps of débris which now cover the ground. No effort has been made by the government or the priests or the people to restore or even to arrest the ravages of time or to protect or preserve the architectural monuments that have stood there for ages against the vandals, the earthquakes, and other destructive agencies that have made Samarkand a wreck of its former magnificence.

You would think there would be sufficient pride, piety, and patriotism in the Mohammedan world to perpetuate monuments and institutions chiefly ecclesiastic in their origin and purpose, but the same conditions appear in every country where Islam prevails, except in Constantinople, Cairo, and one or two other cities. Islam is a dying religion. It has reached a hopeless stage of decay, if the appearance of its mosques and meddresses, its shrines, the mausoleums of its saints, its cemeteries, and other public institutions may be accepted as evidence. I have never seen a new mosque in any Mohammedan country; I do not know of one that has been built within the last century, and few have been repaired. Everywhere the indifference is the same; everywhere the same degree of dilapidation may be found, even in the most fanatical cities like Bokhara and Damascus.

Some writers have said that the ruins of Samarkand are impressive, but to me they are pitiful. The indifference of the priests and the public to their rapid disappearance

is exasperating to every one who has a reverence for historical associations and artistic monuments.

The Persians used to call Samarkand the centre of the universe, the hub, like Boston. It was the Athens of Asia for learning and culture, but a Babylon for extravagance and vice. The luxury and immorality of its rulers and its citizens were the cause of its decay.

When Samarkand succumbed to the military genius of Alexander the Great, he tells us that its wall was seventy stadia in circumference and was accessible by nineteen gates. Only a small section of that wall remains, and all of the gates have disappeared. The city has been besieged and looted many times, and thrice entirely destroyed; then rebuilt and beautified by other kings and conquerors until it reached the pinnacle of its fame and magnificence at the close of the fourteenth century.

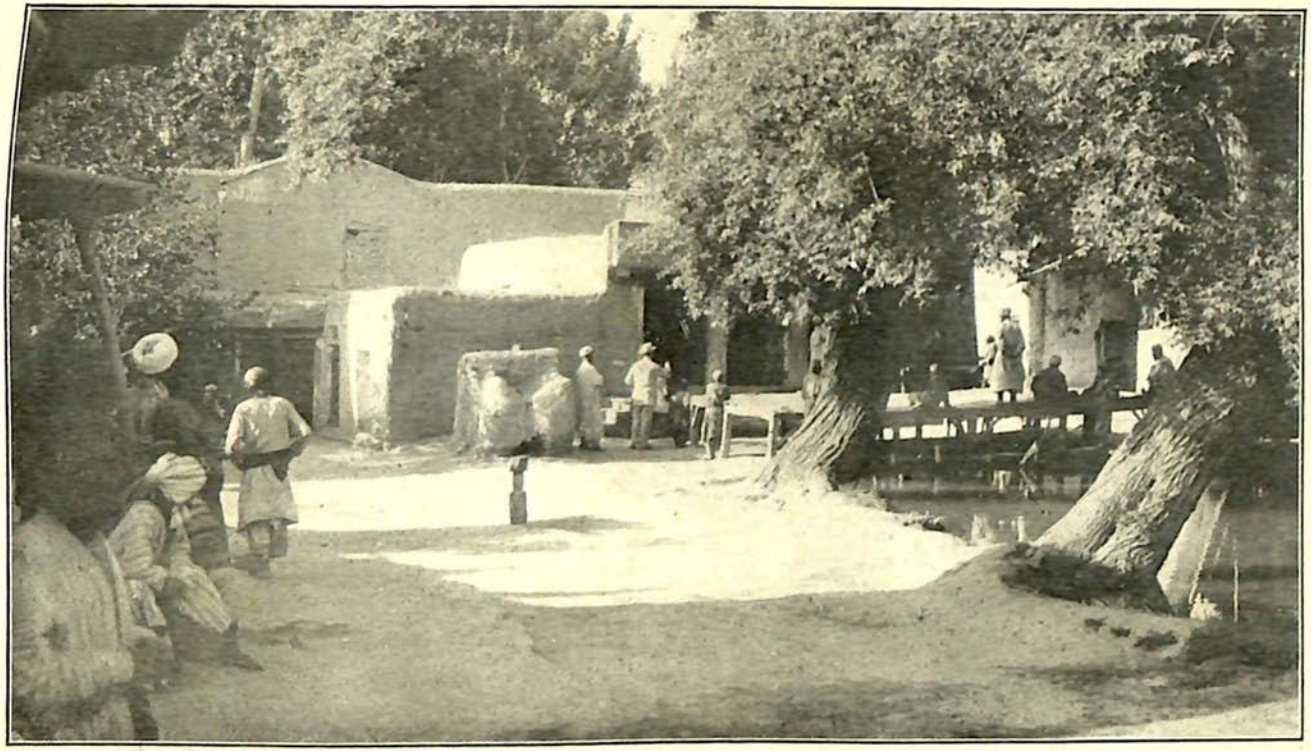
The Russians captured the city in May, 1868, under General Kaufmann, after a brief and uneventful siege, which he described as one of the brightest and most glorious pages in the history of the Russian advance in Asia. But its present rulers evidently care nothing for its historical associations or its artistic glories, and consider it only a valuable prize in the great game of war. They keep the Kotash, the coronation stone of the Tartar emperors, in one of the warehouses where grain and fodder for the horses of the artillery are stored. We tried to see it, but were unable to do so, because the captain of the battery which happens to use that particular storehouse had left Samarkand on a month's leave and had taken the key with him. The Russian government paid the expense of restoring the tomb of Tamerlane, and it is the only building of historical interest and the only

one of the great architectural monuments which made Samarkand the wonder and the glory of the Asiatic continent, that is in an orderly condition to-day.

In visiting the mosques and tombs and colleges with which that ancient city abounds, we could scarcely find anyone competent to give us information about them. When we were fortunate enough to do so, their statements were usually disputed or ridiculed by the bystanders, and some of them were so preposterous and incredible as to be unworthy of notice. For example, an old priest who is in charge of the Bibi Khanum, the second grandest group of buildings in Samarkand, assured us that they were destroyed only eighteen years ago, when Schuyler, who was there in 1875, described the ruins exactly as they stand to-day, and said they were shaken down by a succession of earthquakes in the latter part of the eighteenth and the earlier part of the nineteenth centuries.

I was unable to get any information as to the location of the palaces of the princes who made that their capital and maintained courts whose magnificence was the theme of gossip throughout the world five or six hundred years ago. There must have been many handsome mansions in those days, but they have all vanished, and the present generation does not know and does not seem to care even where they stood. It was only by accident that we learned where Tamerlane's palace was placed. The walls are entirely obliterated and their sites are undoubtedly concealed to-day by the mud cabins of the present population.

Samarkand at one time is said to have had a million population. The only census taken since Russian occupation disclosed a total of 160,000. The new town, which is



A GLIMPSE OF SAMARKAND.

almost exclusively Russian, has grown considerably since and there are now probably about 175,000 in both the old and the new cities.

Tamerlane had a country palace surrounded by gardens and a grove ten or twelve miles from the city when the wedding festival described by him in his memoirs took place, but its location is disputed. Nothing remains of the building or the walls and no one in generations past took interest enough to record the facts or even hand down a tradition concerning the actors and the incidents and the scenes of the most important historical events in the history of Turkestan.

Occasionally, however, the visitor comes across some relic of mediæval barbarity. For example, within the walls of the citadel where the palace of the emir used to stand and the other officials of the government had their headquarters, is a subterranean prison which seems to have been hewn out of the rock. It is an immense chamber, dark and filthy, at least thirty feet from the surface of the ground. It can be reached only by a shaft about six feet square. Prisoners were let down by ropes, and their food and whatever else they were permitted to have was lowered in the same way. It is said that nothing ever came out of the hole. The rim of the stone curb at the top of the shaft shows grooves that were worn by the frequent passing of the rope. The Scriptures tell us in sundry places of similar arrangements. You will remember that Jeremiah "was let down by cords into the dungeon of Malchiah that was in the court of the prison; and in the dungeon there was no water but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire." I suppose that many good men — and perhaps some of them were prophets

— who offended the despots of Samarkand, had a similar experience. The Russians abolished this old-fashioned method of punishing offenders and have built a clean, wholesome, and well ventilated jail.

There is not a trace of ancient splendour in the old city. I did not see one decent looking building, not one which seemed to have been erected or repaired by the present generation. Everything is on the verge of tumbling down. The narrow, crooked streets are lined with mud walls of windowless cabins or wooden booths on a level with the sidewalk in which all things are sold, whatever the people eat or wear or use in any way for their injury or profit. Everything is dilapidated and filthy, but, oh, how picturesque! The riot of colour in costumes, the Oriental types of faces, the camels, the donkeys, the droskys, the high-wheeled carts, and the peasants loaded with the produce of their farms and gardens, which they bring to market on their backs.

Everybody wears a coat like a rainbow. The poor make them of cotton prints and the rich of silk and brocades. There seems to be a rivalry among all men to get the most brilliant colours and the largest number of them sewed into the same coat.

The streets are always crowded, and if you can get an elevated place and look down upon them they resemble seas of white turbans that undulate like waves as their wearers walk through those narrow thoroughfares. The passion for colour is extraordinary. No matter how humble or hungry a man may be, and even if he have but a single garment, that is made of the most brilliantly coloured material he can find.

The fez of the Turk has disappeared. The turban of the Arab has taken its place, and it is a much more graceful and dignified covering. Occasionally a Persian appears with a round black cap and a tassel hanging from the middle of the crown, and the Sarts wear skull caps made of scarlet or green or blue materials and embroidered with braids of gilt or some gay colour under their turbans. Their undergarments are quite as gay as their outer ones. You can often count a dozen different hues upon the same man, and he, barefooted, strides slowly along in the dust, stroking his beard in a thoughtful way, and contemplating the infinite or something else of similar mystery.

But they put all their finery on their heads and backs and none on their feet and legs. These serene and stately Orientals wear nothing on their shanks but a loose pair of drawers or cotton trousers, and their bare feet are protected from the gravel only by heelless sandals: but Moses and Aaron went around bare-legged and bare-footed; Joseph probably wore nothing but cotton drawers under his coat of many colours; Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Aristides the Just, Seneca, and other sages and statesmen of ancient times did not consider it inconsistent with their dignity to dress that way and the Pharaohs of Egypt set the fashion.

The Mohammedan priests wear robes of dove colour with black girdles, and those who are descended from Mohammed wear turbans of green instead of white muslin.

The men of Samarkand shave their heads and not their faces. No razor ever touches cheek or chin. Everybody wears a full beard, some of them closely trimmed, but most of them of patriarchal length.

We saw only a few women, and they were swathed in

cotton or silk shawls and wore nets of horsehair to hide their faces.

Excepting Tashkend, the modern city of Samarkand is the largest and the finest of all the Russian settlements in Asia, covering almost as much ground as New York or Chicago, embowered in trees, and abundantly supplied with running water, which goes gurgling down the gutters on both sides of every street. The streets resemble sylvan glades, they are so cool and shady. Colonnades of poplars, elms, and other trees run in every direction, no matter which way you look. An India veteran, if he were dropped off here from an æroplane, would be excusable if he mistook Samarkand for the English settlements at Lahore or Delhi or some of the cities in the Punjab.

The groves and the gardens of Samarkand have been the theme of travellers for ages. The ancient writers never grew weary of describing them as resembling the paths to Paradise. This pleasant impression was no doubt heightened by the contrast from the Hungry Desert, which every one who comes to Samarkand is required to cross. It is the loneliest, the most desolate and appalling waste that you can imagine, and for two thousand years has been hungry for the bones of the animals and men that have perished from thirst and fatigue along the trails over its pitiless sands. Coming out of that relentless waste of rock and sand into the arbour that surrounds the railway station at Samarkand, makes one realize the suffering of the ancient travellers who had no first-class railway cars, but had to cross the Hungry Desert on camels at the rate of four miles an hour. How they must have rejoiced when they felt the shade of the plane trees and

heard the sound of the running water in the irrigating ditches.

The railway station is two and a half miles from the old town, and is reached by a long, wide street paved with cobble-stones and shaded with poplars; there are running water streams in both gutters; the rows of one-story buildings are "whitewashed" in vivid colours — purple, blue, yellow, pink, green, and whatever most gratifies the taste of the owner — which gives them a cool appearance. Alternating with these houses are high walls which enclose gardens and groves surrounding the residences of people who do not care to live on the street. The gardens produce in profusion vegetables of every kind, luscious melons, fruits, and berries as fine as you ever saw, and almost everything else that grows from the soil. It is quite surprising sometimes to see fig trees and apple trees side by side, laden with ripening fruit.

The residence of the governor-general occupies a densely shaded enclosure, as dark as a primeval forest. You cannot see anything of the house without passing the gate and walking quite a distance among the trees. The quarters are comfortable and commodious, without ostentation. On two sides of the compound are trees and trees and trees growing so thickly that their boughs are interlaced, and indeed the only place in the Russian town which is not under the shade is the parade ground and the big Greek church with five blue-coloured domes which rises from the farther end.

There is a club where the officers of the Russian army drink and gamble and where the younger set give dances in the winter; an institute where their sons and daughters

are educated, a kindergarten, a primary school, a public library, a museum with empty shelves, and a beautiful villa in the midst of a garden that is occupied by the Russo-Chinese Bank. I have never seen a financial or business institution so delightfully situated, and the manager has the privilege of living in the second story, while business is transacted on the first floor. There are cafés, tearooms, ice cream saloons, book shops, restaurants, drug stores, jewellery stores, barber shops, photograph galleries, groceries, meat markets, and every other modern improvement along the streets of Russian Samarkand, and you can buy the daily papers of St. Petersburg and Moscow ten days old for twenty kopecks, which is only ten cents. Men go about the streets on those nuisances called motorcycles. There are two or three garages with wide-open doors, and the toot-too-toot of the automobiles makes you jump every now and then while you are crossing the street. One is reminded of home by seeing the advertisements of the Remington typewriter and hearing the sonorous voice of the phonograph in the back room of ice cream saloons and cigar shops, while the telephone is as common in Samarkand as it is in any town in the United States.

There are several good hotels, not large or pretentious, but comfortable. Where we stopped, we could eat our breakfast and dinner under the shade of oak trees in the garden to the music of a fountain.

Most of the rooms at the hotel when we arrived were occupied by Persian pilgrims, evidently men of wealth and culture, who had come a thousand miles upon a pilgrimage to the tomb of Daniel the Prophet, which is supposed to be in the suburbs of Samarkand. They looked and acted like

gentlemen, and two of them had children with them — boys 12 and 14 years of age, with calm black eyes, serious expressions and wearing clothes cut precisely after the same pattern as those worn by their fathers — frock coats with velvet collars and full skirts that reach to their knees and are gathered at the waist. The landlord of the hotel told me that fully one half of his patronage comes from Persian pilgrims, who visit the alleged tomb of Daniel for the same reason that Mussulmans go to Mecca, although, if the best authorities are right, the Daniel they are looking for is buried in their own country and not in Samarkand.

In one of the prettiest houses along the main street dwells Ishak Khan, pretender to the throne of Afghanistan, a cousin of the present emir and an involuntary guest of the Russian government at Samarkand, as the ex-Shah of Persia was at Odessa. He is accompanied by his harem and his children. He has a retinue of secretaries and servants, horses and carriages, and an allowance of 4,000 roubles (which is equal to $2,000) a month to maintain an appearance fitting his pretensions; but he is not allowed to leave the place and is like a bird in a gilded cage. He can sing all he likes, but they will never let him out. The Russian government is willing to keep this amiable gentlemen in luxury here for the sake of having a card up its sleeve to play at any time that pretenders are trumps in the game with England. Just now everything is lovely between the two nations and both have signed pledges of perpetual peace and non-interference in the affairs of Persia, Afghanistan and other countries that interest both of them. The present Afghan emir is supposed to be partial to England, but his title to the throne has a large flaw in it, and in case

Russia ever requires a pretext for making trouble, Ishak Khan can be shoved up to the footlights as a wronged man who has been robbed of his rights and furnish a rational casus belli.

We saw our first Hindus in Samarkand, but many of them are there. They control the tea trade and are money changers and general brokers. The Koran, as you know, prohibits the followers of the Prophet from loaning money at interest and imposes awful penalties upon usury. Hence no orthodox Mohammedan can engage in the banking business or place his funds where they can draw interest. Hence he dodges these rules by entering into partnership with Hindus and sometimes with Jews, whose religion does not expressly forbid them to "skin" a debtor when they get a chance. Several of the Hindus are engaged in the caravan trade and send wheat, wool, and manufactured merchandise across the mountains into Afghanistan, India, and China. There is a natural boundary, a range of mighty mountains, between those countries and Turkestan. There are easy passes between the peaks, which have been travelled for ages, and, indeed, there is a legend that Jesus, with his father and mother, once came this way from Galilee, with a caravan of merchants, and stopped in Thibet for many years, where His father pursued his trade as a carpenter and Jesus studied in a meddresse with a Buddhist priest.

In the centre of new Samarkand is a park, and from that park wide streets radiate like the spokes of a wheel. The most important of them leads across the river to the old city; another to the Gur Emir, as the tomb of Tamerlane is called. A third, which is very wide and well paved, runs to the citadel, a large area enclosed within a high wall, which is occupied by the military headquarters, the barracks

of the soldiers, warehouses filled with munitions of war and military supplies, an arsenal and repair shop, and various other appurtenances of a military post. The citadel occupies an eminence overlooking the old city and at several embrasures in the walls rapid-fire guns and eight-inch rifles have been mounted as a precaution against insurrection among the natives. The situation is naturally adapted to the purposes of defence and commands a wide area beyond the city limits; but there is no danger of any resistance to Russian authority. The people are contented and happy and their neighbours at Bokhara, who are still under the authority of a native ruler, would be very glad to trade places with them or be admitted to the same privileges and liberties that the Russian subjects in Turkestan enjoy. The garrison is small compared to those at Tashkend, Merv, Askabad, and other strategic points. I have been told that there are only a thousand troops in Samarkand, when there are from ten to twenty thousand at each of the other points; but they are not needed anywhere.

The other roads which lead from the park are wide and well paved within the limits of the city, but when they cross the boundaries of Russian Samarkand they become mere trails to the desert and pass through heaps of crumbling ruins, shattered domes, and dilapidated walls of buildings that once formed a part of Samarkand when it was a city of large population and commercial importance. Some of these ruins are sufficiently preserved to give an account of themselves, to disclose the purpose for which they were intended, and to emphasize the moral of the words of the prophet that "the glory of this world passeth away."

Every city in the East has what we call a public square.

The Spaniards call it a plaza, the Italians a piazza, the Germans a platz and the Orientals a righistan. It is used as a market place, a rendezvous for the inhabitants, a parade ground for assemblies of the people, and for demonstrations of rejoicings and displeasure. What has often been described as the most notable righistan in the world may be found in the centre of the ancient city of Samarkand. It has excited the admiration of everyone who has ever visited the place. It has inspired the enthusiasm of architects, archæologists and historians; it has been the theme of poets and painters, and has been sketched and photographed and painted and talked about more than any other spot in all Asia, for several hundred years.

This famous righistan is about 400 feet square, paved with ordinary blocks of stone, and is enclosed on three sides by some of the most majestic examples of Saracenic or Arabian architecture ever erected. The fourth side is open and occupied by ramshackle booths made of mud walls, odd pieces of lumber, strips of canvas, sheets of tin, and other promiscuous materials, for the sale of vegetables, meat, and miscellaneous merchandise. It is a sort of a ragbag of a place, a hotch-potch, but is attended by some of the most serious and serene men of Oriental type that you can imagine. They wear garments of brilliant colours, yellow, green, purple, and scarlet, in stripes and plaids, and their intellectual looking heads are crowned with snowy turbans, but their legs and feet are bare. They squat with their legs crossed in little narrow booths, sip coffee, smoke cigarettes, gossip with each other, and scrap maybe with their customers over the price of their wares.

Lord Curzon, in his admirable book called "Russia in

Central Asia," published in 1889, declares that the righistan of Samarkand "was originally and is still, even in its ruins, the noblest public square in the world. I know nothing in the East approaching it in massive simplicity and grandeur and nothing in Europe, save perhaps, on a humbler scale, the Piazza di San Marco at Venice, which can even aspire to enter the competition. No European spectacle indeed can adequately be compared with it, in our inability to point to an open space in any Western city that is commanded on three of its four sides by Gothic cathedrals of the finest order. For it is clear that the meddresse of Central Asian Mohammedanism, in both its architectural scope and design, is a lineal counterpart and forerunner of the minster of the West. Instead of the intricate sculpture and tracery crowning the pointed archways of the Gothic front, we see the enamelled tiles of Persia, framing the portal of stupendous magnitude. For the flanking minster towers or spires are substituted two soaring minarets. The central lantern of the West is anticipated by the Saracenic dome and in lieu of artificial colour thrown through tinted panes, from the open heavens shine down the azure of the Eastern sky and the glory of the Eastern sun. What Samarkand must have been in its prime, when these great fabrics emerged from the mason's hands, intact and glittering with all the effulgence of the rainbow, their chambers crowded with students, their sanctuaries thronged by pilgrims, and their corporations endowed by kings, the imagination can still make some endeavour to depict."

No one can observe the original of the picture Lord Curzon has painted without profound emotion, but I think he has put it rather strong.

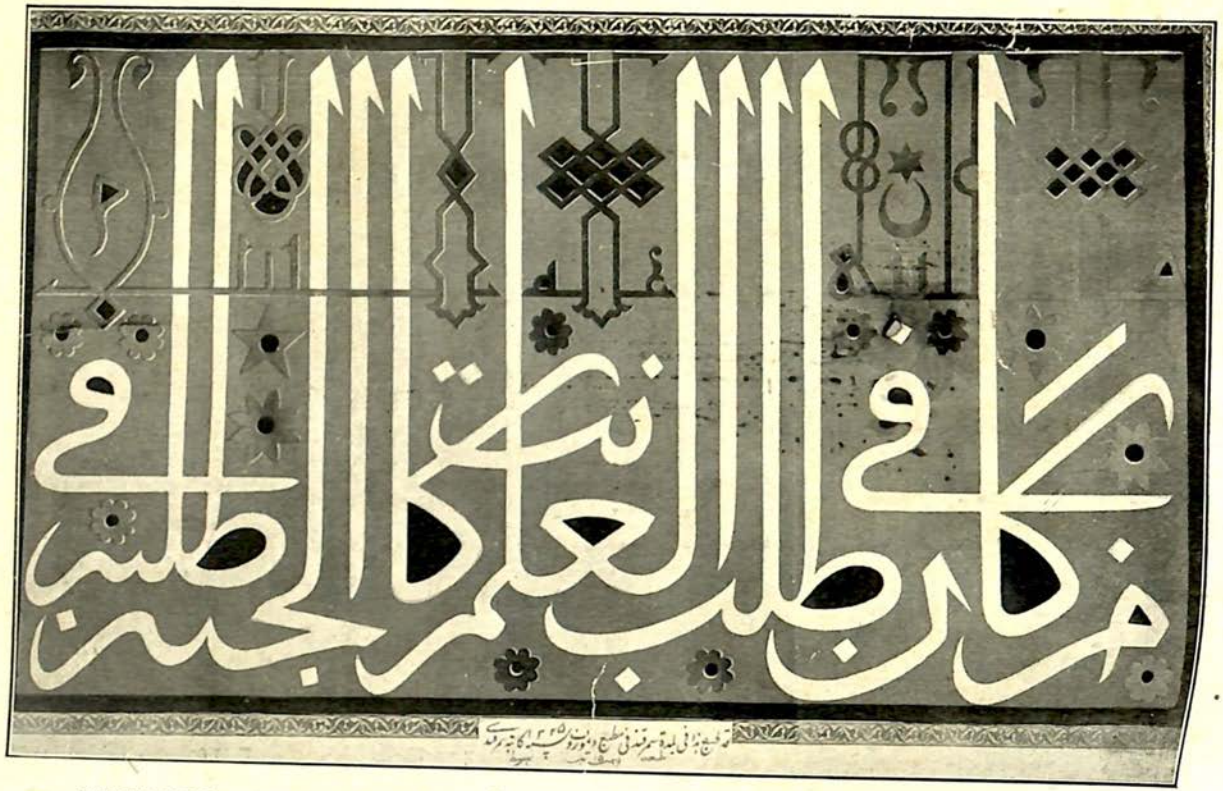
These magnificent meddresses are colleges for the education of young Mohammedans who desire to become priests or judges or officials of the government. There is no object for an Oriental to obtain an education unless he desires to fill one of those positions. The meddresses were erected by wealthy and benevolent men for the same reason, and with the same motive that inspired the generous gifts that have recently been made to Princeton and are now being enjoyed by other institutions of learning in the United States.

Each of the three colleges occupies the full side of the square. Two of them, standing opposite, are very similar in proportions and design. The third, opposite the vacant side of the square, is quite different, and unique among all the buildings of the kind that I have ever seen. This is called the meddresse of Uleg Beg, and was built by a grandson of Tamerlane in 1421.

Upon the east side of the square is the meddresse of Shir-Dar (the lion bearer), so called from the pictures of Persian lions upon the enamel tiles which cover the façade. It was built by the emir who ruled at Samarkand in 1601, a descendant of Tamerlane.

The third, called the Tillah-Kar, which means "the gold plated" or "gold covered," was built in 1618 by the Emir Mirza Ourlank, also a descendant of Tamerlane, and was so named because of the gold enamel and mosaic work and the gold leaf with which its surface was covered. The architect of Tillah-Kar was an Arabian, but — woe to him who lacketh reverence and gratitude — his name has been forgotten.

The meddresses of Uleg Beg and Shir-Dar are both entered through majestic arches, sixty feet wide at the base and 132



INSCRIPTION OVER THE ENTRANCE OF THE TOMB OF TAMERLANE, SAMARKAND.

feet from the threshold to the apex, which is a narrow point. These arches are surrounded by noble and massive façades of masonry, which, at one time, were entirely covered with Persian tiles of deep turquoise colour, bearing fanciful but artistic designs, Each panel was different and on either side of the arch elaborate arabesques were interwoven with inscriptions from the Koran in the beautiful Arabic script which is so ornamental and can be utilized in such an effective way in all forms of decorations.

The elevation of the façades is perhaps 160 or 175 feet — I could not get the exact measurements — and the surface on each side of the arch is perhaps sixty feet wide. The plan of the meddresse of Shir-Dar is completed by a melon-shaped dome on one side, rising from the roof of a mosque, and on the other side by a twin building without a dome, which was originally intended for the business offices of the college.

The front of the meddresse of Uleg Beg is similar, except that there is no dome and the façade of the mosque is relieved by panels of marble fretwork of exquisite design and as delicate as lace. These panels are similar to those in the mosques and tombs erected by the moguls at Delhi and Agra in India.

At the four corners of the square, on either side of the façades of both meddresses, rise minarets to the same height as the building. They are not like the delicate, slender, pointed minarets of Cairo, Constantinople, and other Turkish cities, which are modelled after the cypress tree, but are heavy, clumsy, chimney-like structures, about the same size from the bottom to the top and crowned with capitals similar to those of Ionic pillars. These towers, perhaps 175 feet in height, were once entirely veneered with blue

tiles, set in fantastic designs. They are used as minarets. There are spiral stairways inside of them lighted by holes pierced in the sides of the tower, and at the appointed hours, muzzeins climb to the top and call the faithful to prayer.

The minarets attached to the college of Uleg Beg appear to lean away from the front of the building, at nearly the same angle as the famous tower of Pisa, and that phenomenon has been the subject of much discussion. The priests and the professors, as is customary, told us that the slender spires were thrown out of perpendicular by earthquakes. Several writers have advanced the opinion that they were intended to lean by the architect, but Eugene Schuyler, formerly American minister to Russia and Turkey, who wrote the first and most complete book in English about Turkestan, insists that the leaning appearance of the minarets is an optical illusion, a trick of the architect. He declares that they are perfectly straight and perpendicular, but that the walls of the façade of the building gradually diminish in width for the entire distance from the ground to the top, and create the effect that has been the subject of such heated dispute. Dr. Lansdell, an English scientist, claims that he has been able to confirm Schuyler's theory with a plumb line. He says that he climbed to the top of both minarets and by actual tests discovered that they are absolutely perpendicular, and not an inch out of plumb, but that the façade of the meddresse is seven feet wider at the foundation than it is at the top.

The third meddresse, known as the Tillah-Kar, is entirely different from the other two. It has a central archway and façade 112 feet in height — a square, heavy-looking surface

of brick masonry which was originally plastered over and then covered with gold leaf. You can imagine what a startling effect was produced. Upon each side of this central structure are wings or extensions of similar masonry, showing two tiers of recesses or loggias covered by arches similar in form to the great central arch, but only about one-twentieth the size. They have the effect of a honeycomb. At each corner of the building is a round tower, rising a little above the roofs of the wings, but only two thirds of the height of the central structure.

Within and behind this gorgeous front, which is entirely plain, but was covered with gold leaf, is a tower like the turret of a fortress, which covers a mosque used for worship by the professors and students. The exterior of this tower, which is perhaps one hundred feet high and eighty feet in diameter, was once covered with gold leaf, and the interior walls were laid with gold mosaic similar to that which has attracted so much admiration on the ceiling of St. Mark's Cathedral at Venice. At the time of its completion in 1618 it is probable that the meddresse of Tillah-Kar was the most gorgeous structure in the universe. I would not attempt to compute the acres of gold leaf that were laid upon it, but you can judge from the fact that the front is at least 400 feet long, very nearly 100 feet high in the centre, and 60 feet at the wings.

The interior of all three of these meddresses, like other buildings of their kind, consists of a large court, with fountains in the centre, at which the faithful perform their ablutions before entering the mosque to say their prayers. In two of them the fountains are shaded by beautiful trees and banks of flowers are placed in an effective way. In

the Uleg Beg court is a clump of oleanders, blazing with bloom all summer.

Around the four sides of the court are cloisters — in the Shir-Dar meddresse only one story; in the others, two stories, and opening upon them are rows of cells like those in an ordinary monastery. They are windowless and lighted and ventilated only through the doors. The cells are about ten by twelve feet in size, and are furnished according to the taste and the means of the priests or professors who occupy them. Some show evidences of refinement and a love of luxury, others are as bare and ascetic as the cell of a Franciscan. There is usually a large rug upon the floor, and over in the farther corners mattresses covered with blankets and provided with pillows show where the master and his pupil sleep. The shelves on the walls are filled with books, manuscripts, cooking utensils, and other articles. There is usually a table, a chest, and a trunk or two.

Each cell is assigned to a mullah and is occupied by him and a "softa" or student of his choice. They live together and are in constant companionship night and day for several years, getting their frugal meals in a common kitchen which is attached to every meddresse, and indulging in such luxuries and comforts as their means will permit.

The righistan is a busy and fascinating place. In the early morning the entire square is monopolized by the stands of the country people, who bring in meats, fruits, vegetables, and other produce to sell, and the population of the old city go there to buy their daily supplies of food.

As the hucksters sell out they disappear; in the afternoon only a few booths remain, which are sheltered from the sun by improvised canopies of cotton sheeting or sail cloth

supported by poles. Peddlers, fortune tellers, and professional letter writers follow the shade around the square as the sun revolves, and groups of loiterers seek the cool shelter of the majestic arches.

The righistan is a public employment agency also. It is the custom of people in need of help to come there to engage workmen, labourers, mechanics, and clerks. If a resident of Samarkand wants a carpenter he looks for one in the righistan instead of going to a shop, and the gatherings of the unemployed are often very large.

The righistan is also the general loafing place of the community, and idle people go there to learn the news. It is a sort of clearing-house for the exchange of information, and groups of sedate-looking citizens, with snowy white turbans and coats of as many colours as a clown would wear in a circus, sit around cross-legged on the pavements, solemnly uttering their opinions upon every subject that is proposed, from the comet to the price of cotton.

We were very much interested in one group, composed of a dozen men or more, each of whom carried a bird in his breast. We could not find out what they were doing. The birds were mostly young quail, very tame and submissive, and seemed to approve of the proceedings. They hopped about upon the pavement within the circle, but made no attempt to escape. There seemed to be some significance in the performance, but unfortunately our interpreter could not talk the Usbeg dialect, and the priests, who were the only ones with whom he could converse, did not seem to know themselves what the men were doing with the birds, and they did not know anything else either. No two of them agreed about the dates when the meddresses were

erected or of the earthquake by which they were destroyed. I never before found such dense ignorance and indifference concerning local affairs in any community.

The bazaars at Samarkand are not so interesting as those of other cities in Turkestan, nor are they so well kept. The goods are almost entirely modern, and most of them come from Moscow, but the ramshackle coffee-houses, where the aged Sarts sit all day long in the shade and play chess and dominoes, are each worthy of a place upon a painter's canvas. Everything is dirty and decayed, but it is, nevertheless, artistic and attractive, if you don't mind the odours.

Samarkand was called the head and Mecca the heart of Islam, an epigram which arises from an ancient legend. The Arab missionaries who brought the first knowledge of Allah and Mohammed, his prophet, to Central Asia camped on a hill called Tchupanata, where there is a shrine to the patron saint of the city of Samarkand. Being hungry from their travels, they killed a sheep, cut it up according to the custom of that day, and put the pieces in a pot to boil. While they were waiting for their dinner to cook, they discussed their plans for the future, and agreed that the man who drew the head should go to Samarkand, and he who drew the heart should return to Mecca. The one who drew the heart resided on the top of Tchupanata all the rest of his life and converted the people of Samarkand to the religion of Mohammed. Uleg Beg, the grandson of Tamerlane, erected an observatory by the side of this shrine and there made the observations and calculations for the astronomical tables which bear his name.

A certain Prince Sembat, who is described as high constable of Armenia, came to Turkestan in 1246, and in his

reports written to the patriarch of the Armenian church at Erivan he describes the flourishing condition of the Christian community, the large number of Christian churches, and gives an interview with the bishop concerning the privileges that have been conferred by the khan upon the Christians.

Marco Polo visited Samarkand, but did not go to Bokhara. He describes the former city as "noble and grand" and as the residence of many wealthy people, and refers to the central pillar of the Church of St. John the Baptist as being miraculously supported in the air, a precious stone which had originally been its support having been removed by the Moslem authorities.

There is no trace of any Christian church having existed in Central Asia from that time up to the Russian invasion of 1862. But that is not strange. Very few visitors went there and very little was written about the country. No place in the world has been surrounded by such a thick veil of mystery and none has been so difficult of access for centuries.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER XIV

THE MOSQUES AND MAUSOLEUMS OF SAMARKAND

FIVE hundred years ago Samarkand was a focus of learning, wealth, and power. It stands in about the geographical centre of Asia, equidistant from the Pacific Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and from the Polar Sea and the Indian Ocean; and, although there was an almost insurmountable barrier on the north and west in the form of a desert until the railway was built, and in the form of a range of lofty mountains on the south and east, it was sought by multitudes of influential and intellectual men, who visited it frequently or made it their residence. They called Samarkand "The Queen of the World." No Englishman or European, no Christian, went there for centuries because of the fanatical disposition of the emir and the people, and very little was known of the place except through native authorities until the Russian occupation.

Samarkand had a population of 1,000,000 people, and, some claim, 2,000,000, for centuries. It was the source of ecclesiastical authority and influence, and its mosques and meddresses — I understand there were altogether 167 institutions of the kind in the place — made it a lighthouse of learning and attracted thousands of students from the Mohammedan world. It was their pride in this fact, as well as their piety and a benevolent desire to benefit their

fellow-men, and promote the diffusion of knowledge and the teachings of the Koran, which caused the rich emirs and noblemen to establish the colleges, and other rich men to endow them from time to time with funds for their maintenance. For example, there is a legacy to pay for candles so that the students and professors can read at night; but I understand that the greater part of the funds have been dissipated and the revenues now are barely sufficient to meet the ordinary expenses.

In one corner of the righistan, near the entrance to the meddresse of Uleg Beg, is the tomb of Imani Atoum, a merchant of Samarkand, who died in 1655 and left a large sum of money to assist the professors and students of that particular institution. A cenotaph of masonry enclosed by an iron railing was placed around his coffin in the public square as a recognition of his generosity. Two poles are fastened to the sarcophagus with plumes of horsehair and flags of cheap red flannel hanging from them, which are absolute protection against the evil eye.

I asked one of the mullahs why the income from the Atoum legacy had not been applied to keep the meddresse in repair. He answered that the money was exhausted long ago, and that there were no funds left except for oil and candles. I got a similar answer whenever I asked a similar question at the other meddresses.

The money has been stolen from time to time and the present generation knows very little about it. There do not seem to be records of any kind connected with either of the institutions.

Uleg Beg, a grandson of Tamerlane, who erected the largest and finest of the colleges, was his successor on the throne

and eminent as a sovereign. His reign was distinguished by great progress. He carried out the policy of his grandfather and maintained the honour and dignity of the dynasty. He won great fame as an astronomer, and a treatise on that subject written by him in 1437 is still used as a text book in the meddresses of Samarkand, although it would scarcely suit progressive astronomers of the modern world.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part treats of the several great epochs in the history of mankind up to the time of writing (1437) and the influence of the planets upon them; the second part reviews the extent of human knowledge concerning the stars; the third describes the several constellations and the positions they occupy; and the fourth describes the planets and fixed stars, and gives the accepted rules of astrology.

Uleg Beg was a great soldier as well as a scientist. He fought several battles, in which he was victorious, and did not hesitate to cut off the head of his own son and place it, impaled upon the point of a spear, over the entrance to this very meddresse when he caught the young man conspiring against him.

The Shir-Dar was erected by another emir or sultan of the same line of descent, several generations after Uleg Beg. He, too, was a scholar, a soldier and an able administrator. The architect was a Persian named Ad Abdu Sattar, although the learned mullahs who occupy the meddresse disputed this fact with great energy and were becoming quite excited over it when they were called down by a venerable old gentleman who seemed to be in authority over them.

We were followed about the righistan and through the meddresses by a group of priests, who seemed to be quite

as curious about us as we were about them. One of them offered several coins for sale, and, after brief negotiation, although I have no comprehension of their value, I bought them at a nominal price. He claimed that one of them is a Greek coin, for it bears the bust of Iskander Macedonsky, as they call Alexander the Great; another is evidently from an Assyrian mint; and a third was coined during the year 1402 at Samarkand, when Tamerlane was at the height of his power.

The educational methods of the Mohammedan meddresses are quite different from those of our colleges and theological seminaries. Each cell is assigned by the trustees of the institution to a mullah, or priest, who is entitled to occupy it thereafter as long as he lives and to enjoy his portion of the income of the institution if it should be so fortunate as to have any. In the Uleg Beg meddresse there are to-day 108 professors. In the Shir-Dar there are seventy-two, and in the Tillah-Kar about fifty.

Some of the mullahs increase their incomes by telling fortunes, by giving legal advice to clients (the Koran is the only code of laws which they possess), by writing letters, preparing documents, and otherwise applying their knowledge of the art of penmanship to the service of the public. There are other fortune tellers, professional astrologers, and professional letter writers in the courtyard of every mosque, and they seem to be well patronized.

Each mullah or professor in the meddresse has a larger or smaller number of pupils according to his reputation or disposition, who pay him fees for tuition, make him presents of clothing and food, and share with him the pocket money and provisions they receive from home. Each mullah has

one disciple occupying the same cell and acting as his assistant, secretary, and servant, like those of the Brahmins in India that you read about in Kipling's story of "Kim." The other pupils live where they like and receive their instructions in a group or individually. There are no regular courses or organized classes, and the same mullah is expected to carry them through all the grades, teaching them to read if necessary, in the first place, and polishing them off in astronomy and the occult sciences at the end of their course.

There is always a barber about the meddresse to shave their heads and a cook to prepare their meals — both of them appointed for life.

Some of the meddresses are rich enough to allow small stipends to a limited number of the older students, who correspond to the fellows of an English university, but they are entirely independent of each other and go as they please. The principal studies are the Usbeg and Arabic languages, and the Koran, which is committed to memory. The commentaries upon it are taken up, one after another, until students are prepared to discuss any of the varying opinions concerning the interpretation of the words of the Prophet and expound all the Mohammedan Scriptures without looking at the text. They continue their studies sometimes for twenty-five to thirty years. Time means nothing to them, and it often requires several years to commit the Koran to memory.

We visited several of the mullahs in their cells. They look like a lazy lot, for they were loafing around in an indolent way, playing chess and dominoes, sipping coffee, and pursuing their favourite occupation of contemplating the infinite.

Some of them are men of fine appearance and intellectual faces, and all of them show a serene dignity, an air of repose and deliberation which can be acquired only by an Oriental.

One of them, whose cell we visited, is very proud of a collection of manuscript copies of the Koran which he has accumulated. He showed them to us one after the other with a reverent air, but few of his colleagues had more than half a dozen books, and they were all in manuscript. There were no modern works on theology or philosophy or science, and scarcely a printed volume upon their shelves. No one has a review or a magazine or any vehicle of current thought and investigation. They receive no news of progress or enlightenment, of scientific discovery or achievements, they read no discussions of public questions; nothing but the musty old manuscripts that were used in these same institutions for the same purpose at the time of Tamerlane. And yet there are said to be 167 of these so-called colleges in this one city, attended by several thousand students.

This illustrates the condition of Islam to-day. It has no money to mend the crumbling and shattered buildings; it has no printed books; it has no sources of information beyond the manuscripts that were used four hundred years ago; and the professors of its universities still cast horoscopes by the stars. No new institution has been founded since the meddresse Tillah-Kar was built in 1618; no new text book has been introduced into the faculties since that date. All of the splendid structures are in a pitiable state of decay. Half the beautiful blue tiles that once covered the walls have rotted off and fallen to the ground. Many of those that remain in place have been badly damaged. The walls of the buildings have been badly cracked and the roofs have

been twisted by earthquakes. The hand of the vandal may be seen everywhere, and nothing has ever been done, so far as I can ascertain, to repair or even to protect and preserve them; while the mosque of Tillah-Kar has been stripped of every particle of the gold leaf that gave it its glory.

The Russians are not doing anything directly in the way of educating the natives, but are leaving the schools in the native cities in the hands of the Mohammedan mullahs, as formerly.

Nearly all of the maktabs are supported by voluntary contributions from the parents of the pupils, according to their means, varying from a few kopecs to a few rubles a year, with special gifts in the form of loaves of bread, packages of rice, dried fish, and other provisions on Thursdays. There is no encouragement for an educated man to become a teacher, however, because the compensation of the best of them never exceeds a hundred dollars a year, and the average income of a teacher is not more than fifty dollars.

Education in Mohammedan countries is at the lowest state of inefficiency that it has ever reached, and that fact is being realized to a degree that is painful by the intelligent and progressive members of that faith. The instruction now given at the meddresses is purely formal, and consists of explanations of various sentences in the Koran, which a student for the Mohammedan ministry is expected to learn by heart. A man who can recite the whole of the Koran offhand is called a hafiz and is regarded as an eminent scholar, similar to a doctor of divinity or a doctor of laws with us, but the accomplishment is purely one of memory, and many do not have the slightest idea of the meaning of the words they repeat.

MEDRESSE OF TILLAH KAR AT SAMARKAND, ERECTED IN 1641. THE FRONT OF THIS BUILDING WAS COVERED WITH GOLD LEAF.

After committing the Koran to memory, there are twenty-eight books, chiefly commentaries, which must also be committed to memory. When that is accomplished the student is prepared to administer the law and become a kazis, or judge. The judicial system of the native towns of Central Asia is founded on the Shariat, or teachings of the Koran. In most of the courts the proceedings are entirely oral; no record is kept and no appeal can be taken. No difference is made beween civil and criminal causes. Crimes are not viewed in their relation to the public, but merely to the person injured, and are punished accordingly.

Kazis, or judges, are appointed for life by the khan, after an examination upon the Shariat and the decisions and commentaries which they have committed to memory in the meddresses. As all law is based upon the Mohammedan Bible, any person who is qualified to practice in the courts or sit as a judge is equally competent to serve as a priest. It is difficult for an European to understand the distinction between the legal fraternity and the ecclesiastics.

The Russians have shown their wisdom by not interfering with the native courts. The kazis are still permitted to have jurisdiction over ordinary suits in which natives alone are involved and try them according to the Shariat, but wherever a foreigner is involved the case goes before a Russian court. The Russians have thus avoided the mistake that the English made in India when they abolished the native courts and referred all litigation to modern tribunals. The Mussulman code, which is simply the Koran, answers all the needs of Mussulman communities, although it would break up our whole system of litigation if the Christian courts administered justice according to the teachings of the Bible.

The Gur Emir, as the tomb of Tamerlane is called by the natives, is the best preserved of all the historic buildings in Samarkand. The Russian government furnished the money to put it in order, and it is now under the protection of a party of mullahs, or Mohammedan priests, who watch every visitor closely lest more damage be done. The government made no attempt to restore the original decorations or repair the ravages that time and vandalism have caused, but simply arrested the decay of the building and intends, I understand, to keep it in good repair. At one time the entire exterior was covered with Persian tiles of turquoise colour, but more than half of them have fallen off and disappeared and the remainder are more or less defaced by dampness and abuse, so that the surface looks like a garment of rich material which has been eaten by moths. Around the entrance the tiles are riddled with bullets, fired by Russian invaders at the fleeing Sarts who took refuge within those sacred walls, and every now and then somebody with a penknife picks a leaden pill out of the walls.

This mausoleum does not compare in dimensions, in design, or decoration with the tomb of Napoleon in Paris or the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem or with a dozen other similar structures in Europe, and it is like an ordinary chunk of coal compared with a diamond in contrast with the Taj Mahal at Agra and other tombs in India. Their material is marble, worked with exquisite skill, and the detail is as fine and as perfect as the lines of an engraver, while the Gur Emir is a mass of masonry, of excellent proportions, but impressive only by its size and the recollection that the barbaric love of colour possessed by its builders caused it to be covered with an acre or two of glistening porcelain.

It was built by Tamerlane himself, between the years 1395 and 1404, at the height of his power and glory. That extraordinary man, evidently fearing that his name would be lost in oblivion, endeavoured to place a perpetual reminder before the eyes of posterity. And, lest they should forget who he was and what he did, he caused the portals and the pediments of the building to be inscribed with bombastic eulogies of himself, similar to those engraved upon the approaches to the tombs of the Pharaohs in Egypt. The material of the walls is gray vitreous bricks, made in the neighbourhood, similar in shape and size to those used in Pompeii; and the tiles, which were made in Persia and brought more than nine hundred miles upon the backs of camels, are about six inches square and three-quarters of an inch thick and similar to those with which the exterior of all great buildings in Samarkand were decorated.

The mausoleum stands within a grove, between the old city of Samarkand and the new Russian settlement. It is inclosed by a low balustrade of stone, well preserved and well kept, and the grove is musical with the sounds of running water. The tomb proper is a cartridge-shaped dome, 130 feet high. On the lower half of the elevation the walls are straight and veneered with tiles covered with inscriptions from the Koran. The upper half is slightly bulbous or melon-shaped, and the surface is creased with narrow lines to the apex.

The tomb is approached through a monumental archway, 60 feet high and 36 feet wide at the base, which was also veneered with tiles, and beside it is a minaret reaching very nearly to the height of the dome, perhaps 110 feet, which evidently was originally much higher, and has been

broken off at the top. At the foot of this minaret is a mosque of ordinary size and description. The group of buildings covers a full acre at least, perhaps more, and the walls are of surprising thickness, often showing twenty-five and thirty feet of solid masonry. If this were not so they would have entirely disappeared before now.

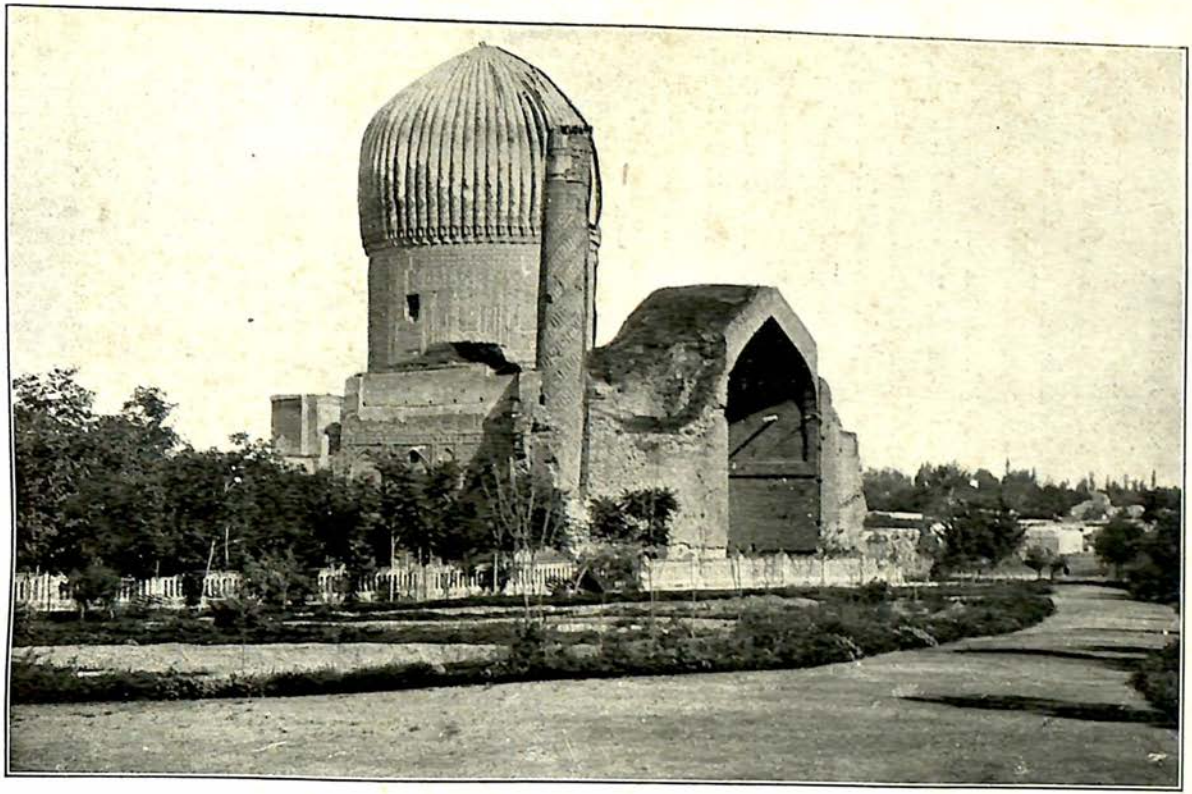
Notwithstanding its rude construction and damaged appearance, the Gur Emir is a noble edifice that would do honour to any nation and to any age. Its design is not so refined, its details are not so delicate, the workmanship is not so skilful, nor the material so expensive, as those which characterize the tombs of Tamerlane's descendants among the moguls of India, but it is a monumental structure, appropriate to the man and worthy of his achievements.

The Russians take great credit for having put the mausoleum in order; but I understand that the original doors, wonderful masses of carving, inlaid with silver and mother-of-pearl, may be found in a museum at St. Petersburg.

The architect was permitted to inscribe his name in white Arabic letters two feet long upon violet-coloured tiles above the arch of the monumental gateway, and it reads, "Mohammed, son of Mahmoud, from Ispahan, hath made this building"; but Tamerlane's biographer tells us that he prepared the design and superintended the work for two years himself, and that the decorating was done by slaves from China, India, and Persia.

Over the door of the mausoleum proper, in similar but smaller letters of white porcelain upon a violet background, are the words:

"He who is in search of knowledge is sought after by Paradise."



GUR-EMIR, OR TOMB OF TAMERLANE, AT SAMARKAND, ERECTED BY HIMSELF IN 1400-04.

A wide, well-kept walk leads from the archway to the entrance of a vestibule with damp, windowless walls and a vaulted roof. The floor is neatly covered with matting. Three aged mullahs in white turbans and dove-coloured robes sat indolently, with their legs crossed, upon a rug in the corner, sipping tea. One of them arose, and, lighting a candle, led us into a vaulted chamber of large proportions, similar to those attached to the sepulchres of the Pharaohs, in which their mourners used to meet and extol the virtues of the dead. There is no light except what creeps in through the narrow, open door.

Over the entrance to the ante-chamber is the familiar inscription in Arabic characters, beautifully interwoven:

"There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

Inside, over the second door, which leads from an ante-chamber into the domed mausoleum, where the sarcophagus rests, are the words:

"This is the Resting Place of the Illustrious and Merciful Monarch; the Most Great Sultan; the Most Mighty Warrior, Emir Timour Kurgân, Conquerer of all the Earth."

From this ante-chamber we stepped into the mausoleum proper, a rotunda covered by a narrow dome eighty-five feet high. It was damp and chilly, although the day outside was very warm. The only light is filtered through square holes pierced in the walls of the dome and protected by stone grills. This shows the limitations of the architect. There is no evidence that glass was used in any of the buildings in Tamerlane's time, and these openings admit the rain and the snow and cause a perpetual dampness, which accounts for the discolouration and decay of the dec-

orations. One can easily see where the tiles have peeled off and fallen, and the wainscotting of the rotunda, which is of alabaster, now looks like a poor quality of marble.

Under the centre of the dome, surrounded by a low balustrade of carved marble, are five cenotaphs. That which holds the place of honour is a block of green serpentine stone, six feet long, twenty-two inches wide, and twenty-eight inches high. For centuries it was supposed to be of jade from some mysterious source in China, and it was broken in halves by Russian soldiers under the delusion that it was very valuable. Some rude surgeon has attempted to conceal the fracture with plaster of Paris painted green to match the stone, and in several places the paint has chipped off. The sides of the cenotaphs are covered with inscriptions testifying to the goodness and the glory of Timour. They are written in Arabic characters, which are the most artistic of any alphabet and lend themselves to decoration.

They give a list of his titles, the names of his parents, his birthplace, the date of his death on the 14th day of the month Shaban, and then follows the genealogy of the family for nine generations, each one of whom is pronounced "worthy of all praise." The inscription proceeds to relate that the mother of one of the ancestors of Tamerlane, named Alan Kociva, known far and wide for her beauty and virtue, was once visited by a wolf, who persuaded her that he was a descendant of the sovereign of the Faithful, Ali, son of Abru, and that Ali destined him to be her husband. She accepted his assurances, "and the descendants of their son conquered the world and will possess it forever."

There has been a great deal of discussion as to the meaning of this singular announcement, and the word which is

usually translated "wolf" has been recently discovered to mean also "a ray of sunshine." It is reasonable to suppose that Tamerlane would prefer to trace his origin to a ray of sunshine rather than to a wolf, and the Tartars have a tradition that his mother conceived him, while a virgin, from the rays of the sun. However, the Arabic word used in this case has two meanings and the translator may take his choice.

There are other inscriptions, elaborate Arabic lettering in colours, quotations from the Koran, praises to Allah and recitals of the conquests of Timour, his military prowess, his divine wisdom and a long eulogy to Ali Ben Abi Talib, founder of the Shiite sect of Mohammedans.

The term Kurgan means literally the "husband of a princess," and is believed to have been used by the builder as a tribute to his wife, for whom he showed, in many ways, remarkable admiration and affection.

At the head of the cenotaph is a little marble shrine or altar for burning incense, a miniature reproduction of the tomb, so discoloured by smoke as to testify that the memory of Tamerlane has not perished. Pilgrims come here from every part of the Mohammedan world. The most prominent of the other cenotaphs is that of Mir Seid Berk, a mullah brought from Afghanistan by Tamerlane as a sort of chaplain, who accompanied him on all his campaigns and exercised a great influence over him. The guide told us that he was "an intimate friend." Another is the tomb of Tamerlane's favourite prime minister, who served him for eighteen years, and the remaining two are for his sons, who died before him and were buried here as soon as the mausoleum was finished.

These cenotaphs are shams. The bodies they represent are in the crypt below, which is reached by a rude stairway, and the good mullah who showed us around was careful to caution us of the danger of slipping upon the damp stone. The sarcophagi occupy precisely the same positions as those above, and are evidently of marble, although the darkness and the flickering of the single candle prevented us from inspecting them closely.

We were impressed by the care and neatness with which the tomb is kept, and the grove that surrounds it. The mullahs show a reverence and habits of order that do not appear at the tomb of Timour's wife and other buildings in Samarkand.

It is a pity that the Russian government allows those noble monuments to perish for the lack of a little money and a little care. Of course, the Mohammedan world should naturally be held responsible for their preservation, and there ought to be public spirit enough among the adherents of that faith in the city of Samarkand to restore and preserve them. Several Mohammedan merchants are very rich but they take no interest whatever. They show neither pride nor patriotism, and allow some of the noblest historical structures in the world to fall in fragments before their eyes.

Nearly one-half of the tiles which cover the surface of Tamerlane's tomb remain in place, and the best preserved are in sheltered places under the arches, and in the corners, which indicates that the weather has had much to do with decay. There is a large crack reaching about halfway down the dome, which should be attended to, but when we called the attention of the mullah to that danger he shrugged his shoulders and remarked that Allah was merciful and

RUINS OF THE MOSQUE OF BIBI KHANUM, ERECTED BY TAMERLANE IN MEMORY OF HIS QUEEN, BETWEEN 1385 AND 1400 AT SAMARKAND.

would protect the dwelling of his servants which he invariably neglects to do.

The "Mosque of Bibi Khanum," is the title of a group of splendid buildings erected between 1385 and 1400 by Tamerlane, in honour of his second wife, who is said by several writers to have been the daughter of a Chinese prince; but the mullahs now in charge of the ruins insist that she was a Persian. They told me that his first wife was Aljaz Agha, daughter of the Emir Kurgan of Samarkand, whom he married when he was twenty-one years old. She died about ten years later, and his second wife, the mullahs said, was Khudjak Ami, daughter of Toghaii Bandjar, a prince of the Province of Khorasan, Persia; and the Bibi Khanum group of buildings, including two mosques, a meddresse, or college, and a khan or hospice for pilgrims, was erected in her honour.

Her tomb is outside the grounds, on the other side of the road, an almost shapeless mass of clay-coloured bricks, badly broken on all sides — the victim, we are told, of an earthquake. It is still possible to trace the outlines of the dome, more than half of which has fallen away, and the walls in several places are standing, although badly cracked. The floor is broken through and the sarcophagus has been removed to an ante-chamber, which is protected only by a dilapidated wooden door hanging from one rusty hinge. The tomb rests on the edge of the native city, just beyond a horse bazaar, and at the entrance of a vast, neglected cemetery, covering an irregular, barren district, as far as the eye can see. Some of the tombs are well preserved, but most of them are in very bad order, and anyone who cared to take the trouble could pick up several cargoes of gravestones

that are evidently discarded and are scattered on the ground.

The sarcophagus, which is believed to contain the dust of Tamerlane's queen, is of plain marble, quite unpretentious, and inscribed with an epitaph in Arabic. It lies in the vestibule, covered with dust, neither an agreeable nor a convenient place to await the summons of the archangel. A flat stone, covered with inscriptions, leans against it, but the attendant does not know anything about it. Three other sarcophagi, each of them bearing inscriptions, are in the same chamber. We could not read the epitaphs and the attendant was equally illiterate; but he said they contained the dust of princesses, probably the daughters of Tamerlane, who were buried beside their mother. Their brothers were buried beside him.

Tamerlane built his own tomb as well as that of his wife. He was far-sighted enough to provide this form of insurance against oblivion. His sons have been forgotten; his contemporaries are unknown; his rival sovereigns, his competitors in the struggle to control the world, are named in history, but excite no modern interest. He brought the architects, the artists, the mechanics, and the materials from Persia, and they came a thousand miles on the backs of camels to do his bidding. He did not count the cost; ambitious despots never do.

The group of buildings familiarly known as the Bibi Khanum Mosque are the only structures that remain of Tamerlane's own construction, except his mausoleum and that of his wife, which I have just described. At the time they were completed, 500 years ago, they were probably unsurpassed for magnificence and barbaric splendour in all

the world, although in refinement of design and detail they did not compare with the temples of Greece and the palaces of Rome. Nevertheless, considering their situation, in the midst of a desert, and the character and training of their builder, they were wonderful beyond the conception of modern minds.

These buildings were intended to honour the virtues, express veneration for the worth, and perpetuate the memory of a woman whose name is not positively known, and concerning whose origin and race there is a dispute, as I have indicated. They cost millions of dollars and absorbed the labour of thousands of slaves, many of them prisoners of war. They occupied a large enclosure, comprising several acres of grove, lawn, and garden, filled with stately oaks, far-reaching sycamores and plane trees, thick-leaved mulberries, and towering poplars, which grow in rows along the irrigating canals. Time, earthquakes, and war, and the hand of the vandal, have spared them and confined their damage to the buildings.

The trees are larger, nobler, and more beautiful than they were when the buildings were in their prime, and although the grounds are ill kept, they are very attractive. Several old women were picking the mulberries the morning we visited the place, and a group of mischievous children were making mud pies on the banks of the irrigating ditches. They stopped their play when they saw strangers enter the ground and followed us around, begging for backsheesh, until one of the mullahs drove them off with a big stick. The high mud wall is broken in many places. On two sides the booths of tradesmen are backed up against it, on a third side is a horse market, and on the fourth side we

could see through the great gaps where they open upon an orchard and green fields.

Within this wall were grouped four and perhaps five magnificent buildings, including two massive mosques, exact duplicates, which faced each other from the east and the west, at a distance of about nine hundred feet. I cannot give all the dimensions, but the floor area was about 250 by 350 feet. They were entered through monumental arches seventy-two feet wide at the base and 150 feet high. The mosque proper was covered by a double dome about 160 feet high, and the room for worship was about 200 feet square.

You can imagine from these figures what imposing buildings they were, and when you know that inside and outside they were covered with pale blue porcelain, from the foundation to the lantern of the dome, you can appreciate how gorgeous they must have looked, and how the Orientals, who have such a passion for bright colours, and anything that glitters, must have admired them. There are a sufficient number of the tiles remaining in place to show how beautiful they must have been.

In addition to the mosque there were two and perhaps three meddresses, or colleges, for the education of priests and government officials, and for centuries they were crowded with students who came from all of the Mohammedan countries, attracted by the reputation of the professors, the glory of Samarkand, and the fact that, owing to the liberal endowments of Tamerlane, no tuition fees were required. But really we know very little about these institutions. The endowments have vanished; no records seem to have been preserved; nobody took the trouble to

keep a diary in those days; very few of the inhabitants of Samarkand could write; and practically the only sources of information are the descriptions which have been left by foreigners who visited the capital of Asia upon official business or from curiosity.

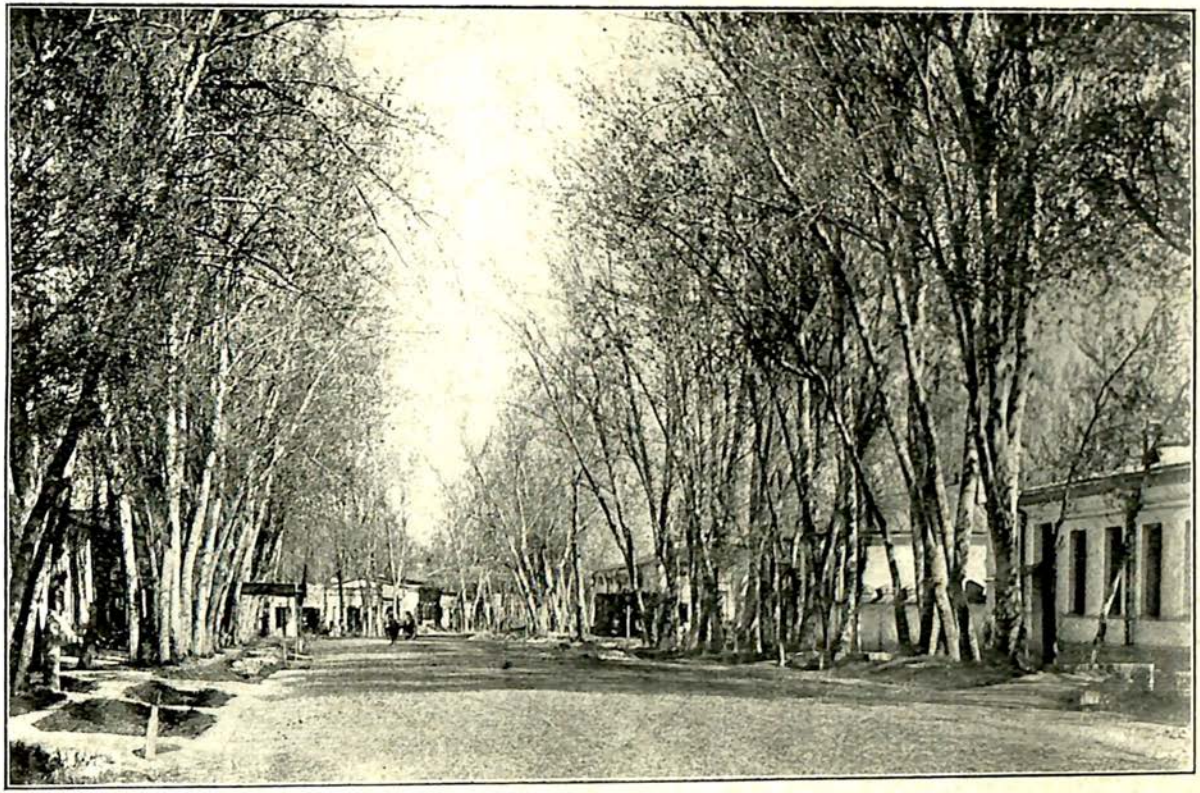
On the third side of the enclosure was an enormous khan, or lodging house for the accommodation of pilgrims, similar to those now maintained at Mecca, at Jerusalem, and at other holy places. The reputation of Samarkand as a nursery of the orthodox faith and the home of learned and pious mullahs attracted millions of the faithful, who were entertained by the munificence of the emperor and doubtless found peace and consolation among the splendid surroundings. Many pilgrims come here now "from all parts of the world," the mullah who escorted us said, "and we accommodate them the best we can" — although the khan is now a shapeless pile of débris, under the shadow of crumbling walls. We saw a group of pilgrims lying prone upon the ground, under the trees, with their coats drawn over their heads to shield them from the flies. Each had a bag of Persian carpet-work, like those you buy in the rug stores at home, and a gourd in which he carried water. The mullah said they had come from the mountains, but what mountains he did not know.

Somewhere in this enclosure was a palace, but no trace of it remains. It is impossible to determine even its location, and no one could tell us when or how or why it was destroyed. Indeed, the ignorance of the present occupants of the place, all of them mullahs or Moslem priests, would have been amusing if it were not exasperating to people in search of historical information.

We had an animated discussion with them as to the date when the buildings were destroyed. They are by far the largest and the finest human monuments in Central Asia; we know that they were built by Tamerlane, and the dates of their erection are worked in with the inscriptions over the arches. The outside and inside walls were adorned here and there with eulogies of "the Emperor of Asia," "the Lord of the World" and other titles of compliment which were bestowed upon Tamerlane. But those were practically all the facts that we could learn, although a dozen venerable men reside within the ruins, and are supposed to have charge of them. The most venerable of the mullahs, who told us that he had lived within that enclosure for more than fifty years, had the assurance to assert that the mosques were destroyed by an earthquake only eighteen years ago, when Schuyler, who visited here in 1875, describes them in the dilapidated state that they appear in to-day, and Vambery, a Hungarian, who came in 1863, laments their destruction.

We argued with the old man a long time, but he would not modify his statement, and grew quite indignant because we questioned his accuracy. He added that the earthquake of 1902 had done a good deal of damage; but insisted that when he came here in the '50s every building was perfect and in use, and none of them suffered the slightest damage until eighteen years ago. When I asked him if Tamerlane was living here at that time he replied seriously in the negative, and added that Tamerlane died and was buried in the Gur Emir many years before his birth.

Abu Tajir Khoji, a Persian writer, who saw these mosques about the middle of the fifteenth century, gives us a very elaborate and enthusiastic description of them. He de-



A STREET IN THE RUSSIAN CITY OF SAMARKAND.

clares that the towers reach the skies; that the azure of the tiles rival the heavens, and that no object in nature is more beautiful or shapely than their arches and their domes. He tells us that Tamerlane brought two hundred artists and five hundred masons from India to do the work, and personally superintended the erection of the buildings.

In the centre of the enclosure is a monumental book rack of marble, exquisitely carved, although the corners have been chipped off in several places and the tracery has been badly damaged. It is ten feet high and twenty feet square, and modelled after the wooden racks used in every mosque to hold the Koran while the mullahs read from it. The priest who showed us around said that in olden times they had a copy of the Koran big enough to fit this rack — and if so its pages must have been fully 10 by 20 feet in size. He told us that they used to rest it there and read aloud to the pilgrims. I never saw anything of the kind before. I have no idea that it was ever used in that way, but nevertheless it is a noble monument.

It is unfortunate that the Russian government does not take some step to obtain an accurate history of these buildings before they all disappear. At the present rate of decay they cannot last many years. It would cost millions of rubles to repair them, but the expense of compiling a history would be small.

There is no conclusive evidence that Tamerlane ever married a Chinese princess. That inference seems to be drawn from the circumstance that one of his titles, "Fuma," means "son-in-law to the emperor of China." Another title was "Khakan," which means "emperor," and still another "Gurgan," which means "husband of a princess." Nine

wives are mentioned in his memoirs, as well as by Clavijo, but none of them is ever referred to as a Chinese. His favourite was the wife of his youth, the faithful Aljaz Turkan Agha, who shared the perils and hardships of his early career, and was his loving companion during the darkest period of his life. She was the granddaughter of the sultan of Samarkand, the daughter of Emir Kurgan, and the sister of Emir Hosein, the chief with whom he had a feud for many years. He married her in 1356, and she died in 1366. In his memoirs he describes his sorrow at her death and remarks: "Verily we belong to God, and to Him shall we return."

After the death of Aljaz, the wife who seems to have had the most influence over him was Sarai Mulk Khanum, daughter of Kazan, sultan of Turkestan, and a descendant of the famous Ghengis. He married her in 1369 and she became the mother of Shah Rokh, altogether the best of his sons.

The following year, 1370, he married the Princess Tukal Khanum, daughter of the khan of Mogulistan, who was also a descendant of Ghengis. The term "Khanum" is the feminine of khan and means queen or empress.

Another of his wives was Eilshad Agha, daughter of Kamar-Uddin, one of his most successful generals.

There is no way to identify any of these wives with the Bibi Khanum to whose memory the great mosque and meddresse at Samarkand were dedicated, and whose tomb stands in partial ruins on the other side of the highway.

Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador who went to Samarkand in 1403, says in his narrative that "the chief wife was named Cano," which means "queen," or "great lady," and she was the daughter of a former emperor of Samarkand named

Ahincan (Kamil Khan), who also reigned over Persia and Damascus. The second wife was called Quinchicano, which means "little lady," and she was a daughter of Tumanga, the king of a land called Andricoja. The names of the others were Dileoltagna, Cholpamalaga, Mundagasa, Vengaraga, Ropa-arbaraga, and Yauguraga, which means "queen of the heart."

Clavijo has a good deal to say about ambassadors from China who were at Samarkand while he was there, but does not refer to either of the wives of Timour as a daughter of the Chinese emperor. From his description Timour treated the ambassadors with contempt. He says: "This emperor of Cathay is called Chuyscan, which means nine empires; but the Zagatays call him Tangus, which means 'pig emperor.' He is the lord of a great country, and Timour used to pay him tribute, but refuses to do so any longer."

The graves of two "holy men" are in Samarkand, or they are believed to be, and are worshipped as such. In the more pretentious of the tombs rest the mortal remains of Shah Zindah, a cousin of Mohammed the Prophet, and one of the most revered saints in the Moslem calendar. The other is claimed to be the tomb of Daniel, the Hebrew prophet of the Scriptures, the interpreter of the dreams of kings, and the prime minister of an empire. There is evidently a misapprehension about Daniel, because he lived in exile and died at Susa, Persia, where the romantic incidents in the career of Esther, the Jewish queen of Artaxerxes, also occurred. Esther and Mordecai, her uncle, who was also prime minister, are buried at Hamadan, Persia, and their tombs are kept in perfect order by Jewish custodians and

are the object of pilgrimages from all the Jewish communities in the east.

Susa was one of the richest cities in the Persian Empire. Descriptions of its palaces and the sumptuous habits of its people may be found in the books of Esther and Daniel in the Old Testament. It was captured and looted by Alexander the Great and has been thoroughly explored by archæologists within the last half century. The frieze of the throne-room and several other architectural features of the palace of Artaxerxes may be seen in the Louvre Museum at Paris.

Daniel's tomb is in the walls of the citadel at Susa. He was buried with the kings, proving the honour in which he was held and the eminence which he attained. His tomb is well preserved, is shaded by groves of palms and reverently guarded by a group of rabbis. It is venerated by Moslems as well as by Jews and visited by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims whose contributions pay for its maintenance. There are khans erected expressly to accommodate them.

The theory of the Samarkand Moslems and Jews is that Tamerlane, after he conquered Persia, brought the remains of Daniel to Samarkand and left the tomb at Susa empty; but archæologists believe that a misapprehension has been caused by a similarity in the name of the great Usbeg statesman, Daniel Bi, who was a khan of Samarkand for more than thirty years in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, and was buried in the tomb which is worshipped for that of Daniel the Prophet. It is not nearly so fine or imposing as the original tomb of Daniel at Susa, although it is well kept.

GUARDIAN OF THE MOSQUE OF SHAH ZINDAH.

GUARDIAN OF THE TOMB OF TAMERLANE.

It is well situated about two miles from the city and is reached by a rough and much-travelled road, always deep in mud or deep in dust, according to the season, which leads through a desolate and neglected cemetery and lifeless sand hills. While we were driving out that way we met several parties of pilgrims who had come all the way from Persia to venerate the Jewish prophet, and they believe that the remains were transferred from Susa here by Tamerlane in the latter part of the fourteenth century.

The mausoleum is an unpretentious building of mud brick, coated with plaster and roofed with tiles. There is a mosque beside it and a large cave in the rock in which pilgrims are accustomed to find accommodations when they have no means to pay hotel bills. From the entrance to the tomb you look down upon a romantic little gorge through which the River Siop flows and turns the wheel of a flour mill, almost at Daniel's feet. The surroundings are very attractive, the trees are thick and in good condition, and everything looks prosperous and well cared for.

The sarcophagus of Daniel is about sixty feet long, six feet wide and five feet high, and the attendant told us that the prophet filled every inch of it. They were big men in those days, he said; the human stature had been growing less and less annually for hundreds of years. Tamerlane was also a very large man, twenty-five or thirty feet tall, and while he could not give us the exact dimensions of Daniel the Prophet, he was so tall that he could step over an ordinary cabin. Noah, who is buried near Damascus, according to tradition, was sixty-five feet high, and other of the patriarchs were of similar stature.

I have never been able to get from any of these people

an explanation of their theory for the diminishing stature of the human race, but I suppose they have some good reason for it.

The tombs of Noah and other patriarchs and prophets that I have seen and the tombs of Esther and Mordecai are blanketed with costly Persian shawls, and that is the custom in India and Turkey. But Daniel's sarcophagus is as bare as the hillside upon which it stands, except for some little red flags and horses' tails and innumerable pebbles placed upon it by pilgrims, each pebble representing a prayer. The Mohammedans place pebbles upon the tombs of the dead whom they revere and upon the altars in their mosques, just as the Roman Catholics burn candles before their altars.

The tomb of Shah Zindah is at the other end of town, near the Gur Emir, in which Tamerlane is buried. It is one of the grandest, as it is one of the most ancient and interesting buildings in Samarkand, and was erected by Tamerlane during the latter part of the fourteenth century, probably between 1385 and 1390. The proper name of the saint who is buried there is Akhmed Zaaman. He was the only son of Ali, the uncle of Mohammed and therefore a first cousin of the Prophet. Akhmed was a mighty man of valour as well as an influential evangelist. He was often referred to as Imani Mahdi (the messiah), but more frequently by the title Shah Zindah, which means "the living king."

The Mohammedans in this part of the country believe that he is only sleeping in his tomb and that he will arise some day and reconquer the world. At the time of the Russian invasion in the early '60s, the priests proclaimed the second advent of Shah Zindah and promised the people

that he would annihilate the armies of the Czar. The prophecy remains unfulfilled, but the veneration of "the living king" has not suffered. His tomb is more carefully looked after and is visited by larger numbers of pilgrims than any other in Turkestan. Groups of venerable men with intellectual and serene faces and dignified manners are always to be found there either in prayer or contemplation.

Shah Zindah conquered this country fifty-two years after the flight of the Prophet and reigned for a quarter of a century over Central Asia, with Samarkand as his capital. Tamerlane built this tomb upon the spot where Kasim Ibn Abbas, another Moslem saint, suffered martyrdom nearly thirteen hundred years ago.

There are several other tombs connected with the mausoleum of Shah Zindah, being grouped upon a hill on the edge of the city and reached by a long flight of stairs. You pass through a rather low archway into a courtyard, from which four large buildings with lofty domes are entered. The exterior surface of all of these buildings was once covered with tiles, acre after acre of enamelled porcelain of exquisite lustre and artistic design, and much of it still remains to indicate how splendid the group of mausoleums must have been when they were new and fresh from the hands of the masons.

In the sheltered places, free from exposure to the weather, the tiles are almost perfect, even after 500 years of neglect. In other places they have been torn down or rotted away, the mortar between the bricks has become detached and has fallen out, and the bricks themselves, although fired clay, are crumbling.

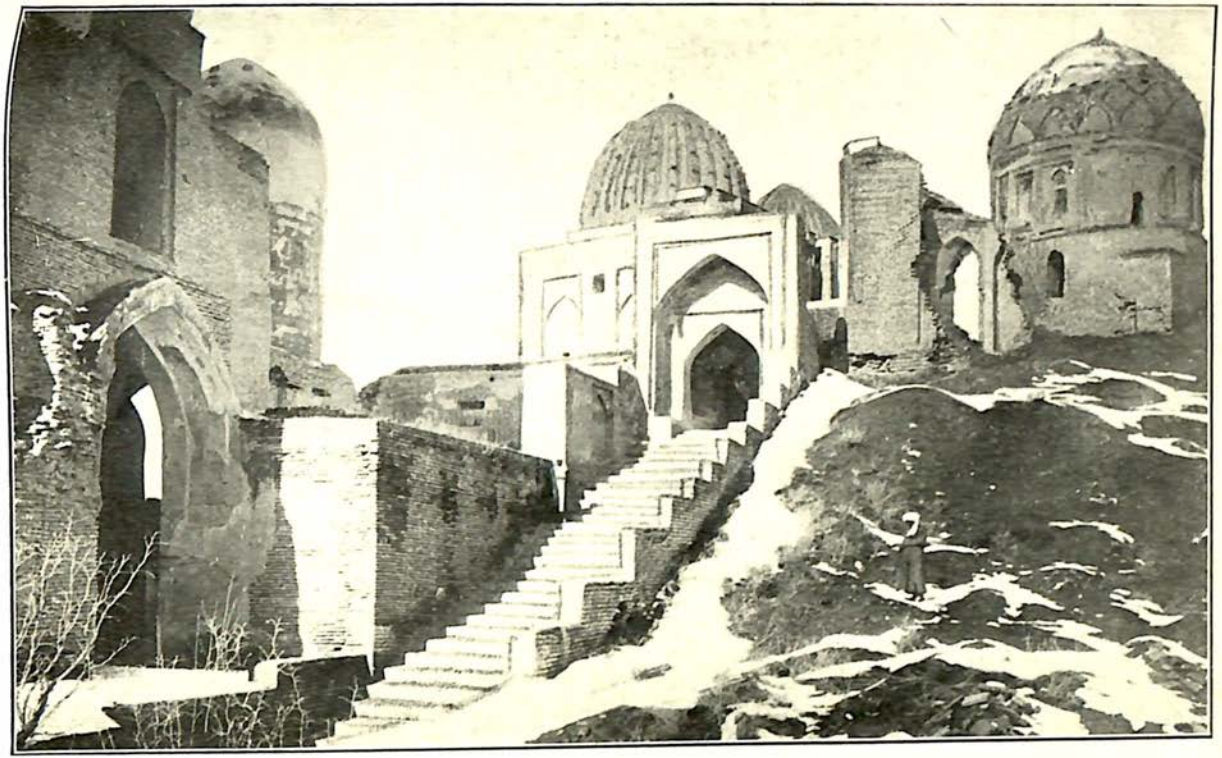
The tomb of Nam-asga, one of the khans of Samarkand,

which was built in 1630, is almost perfect. A few thousand dollars would restore it completely, provided it is possible to obtain masons of sufficient skill to repair and restore the tiles. The mausoleum of Ichwat Khan, another of the descendants of Tamerlane, is also in excellent condition, but it is totally neglected and does not even have the care of a custodian.

The style of decoration is almost uniform, and the patterns on the tiles are limited, although the ages of the different buildings vary from 200 to 600 years. All of the tiles came from Persia. There is no doubt about that, and we are to conclude also that the manufacturers never changed their patterns during all those centuries. The same is true of rugs. The modern rugmakers never vary their designs. They have, perhaps, a dozen different varieties, but the same family or the people of the same town adhere to the same patterns, generation after generation, even century after century, without the slightest variation, so that an experienced buyer is always able to tell where a rug comes from.

I presume there are experts who can do the same with tiles. The finest tiles are found to-day in some of the mosques in India, in the Alhambra of Granada, the Alcazar of Seville, and the mosque of Valideh Sultana at Constantinople, which was erected in 1615 by the mother of Mohammed IV. The interior, which is very large, covering nearly half an acre, is lined with porcelain enamel as high as thirty or forty feet. Above that the walls and domes are painted in imitation of tiles.

The coloured tile has always been associated with Mohammedan palaces and places of worship. The Mohammedan



MAUSOLEUM OF SHAH ZINDAH, "THE LIVING KING," AT SAMARKAND, ERECTED BY TAMERLANE, IN THE LATTER PART OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

races have been the most skilful and artistic of all tilemakers. That form of building material — porcelain enamel on white clay in colours — is believed to have originated with the Phœnicians on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. They were also the first to discover the process of making glass. This is believed to have been by accident. A group of sailors camping upon the shore of the Bay of Acre, under the shadow of Mount Carmel, observed that the sand beneath their fire had melted and formed a transparent mass. Their discovery was developed by artisans in that neighbourhood. The manufacture of tiles was commenced about the same time. The art was transported to Spain by the Phœnicians. The Moors took it up and improved upon it and the buildings erected on the Iberian Peninsula before its occupation by the Romans were lined with tiles equal to those in the Alhambra of Granada and the Alcazar of Seville.

The Persians derived the art from the Phœnicians and became the most successful tilemakers in the world. Tamerlane introduced tiles here and probably in India also, for the tombs and the mosques of his posterity, who were the moguls of India, are covered with them.

The great Baber, in his memoirs, written in 1497, declares that "in the whole habitable world there are few cities so pleasantly situated as Samarkand." He describes the mosques and meddresses, the tombs of Tamerlane and Shah Zindah, and other splendid edifices which exist either wholly or in part to-day, and tells us, too, about the grandeur of the palaces erected by Tamerlane and his sons, and the curious architectural features introduced in several of them. One palace, he says, "is overlaid with the porcelain of China,

whence it is called 'the Chinese house.' A person was sent to China for the purpose of bringing it. Within the walls of Samarkand is another ancient building called the Laklala, or 'echoing mosque,' because whenever any person stamps on the ground in that mosque an echo is returned. It is a strange thing, the secret of which is known to nobody."

CHAPTER XV

TASHKEND, THE CAPITAL OF TURKESTAN

THE capital of Turkestan, the residence of the Russian viceroy or yarin padishah (which means half-king), and the headquarters of the military forces of Central Asia, is the city of Tashkend, situated upon the River Jarhik, a branch of the Syr Daria, which was known to the ancients as the Jaxartes River. It stands on the edge of the western foothills of the mountains which form a natural boundary between Russian possessions in Asia and the Chinese province of Tien Shan. These mountains consist of successive ranges and are known by various names — the Kharli Tau, the Alai Tau, the Urtak Tau, and the Alexandrian Mountains, and they culminate in a great range known as the Kizil Yari, whose peaks rise to the height of twenty-five thousand feet and are second only to those of the Himalayas which form the boundary between Thibet and India. The Kizil Yari are really a continuation of the Himalaya range and extend northward into Siberia.

Tashkend is an ancient city. Its origin is lost in the mist of the ages. Geographically it is on the same parallel of latitude as Bombay and is directly north of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. Its latitude is about the same as that of Constantinople and Rome.

Tashkend was captured by the Russians in October, 1868, after a brief siege, by only 1,950 troops, and, according

to the Russian policy, General Alexander Tchernaief, who was in command, called together the "elder statesmen," and after persuading them of his benevolent intentions, issued a proclamation which is a model of diplomacy:

"By order of the Great White Tsar, his lieutenant, General Iskander Tchernaief (the use of the Uzbek term for Alexander being intended as a compliment to Alexander the Great), hereby enjoins upon the inhabitants of Tashkend that they must in everything act according to the commands of Almighty God and the teaching of the orthodox religion of Mohammed, on whose descendants be the blessings of God. Let them say their prayers five times a day, not passing by the appointed time an hour or even a minute. Let the mullahs go to their schools and teach the Mohammedan faith and not waste the time of their pupils by an hour or a minute. Let the inhabitants of the country occupy themselves with their work. Let the people of the bazaars carry on their trade with profit. Let nothing be thrown into the streets and let them be kept clean. The Koran forbids you to drink buza and whiskey, to play games of chance, or to be licentious; therefore beware and avoid everything that is contrary to your religion. The soldiers will take nothing from you. Houses, gardens, fields, lands, water mills, and everything else you have will remain your property and no soldier will come into your courtyard. If he does, let us know at once and he will be severely punished. If anyone kills or robs a neighbour he will be judged by your laws and the tenth part of what is taken from the products of your lands I remit to you in accordance with the will of the Great White Tsar to show you his disposition of kindness."

Shortly after General Kaufmann, who was the chief in command of the campaign, organized a provincial government and was appointed the first viceroy of Turkestan. His administration was peaceful, progressive, and remarkably successful. His assistant and successor was General Kuropatkin, the real hero of the recent war between Russia and Japan. Although Kaufmann is entitled to the credit of planning the city and defining the policy of the government, Kuropatkin did most of the work, and to his energy, ability, and tact more than to any other cause is due the satisfactory condition that now exists in that part of the Russian Empire. Kaufmann and Kuropatkin both knew how to deal with the natives, and the policy they inaugurated and the regulations they framed are still in force.

In the centre of the city of Tashkend, in a beautiful public square which is composed of four large blocks densely planted with many varieties of trees, is a tall shaft of granite with an inscription that calls Kaufmann "The conqueror of Samarkand in 1868, and of the Khanate of Khiva in 1873." Kaufmann was a great man, a genuine empire builder; none more succesful has ever been known in history, but Kuropatkin should also have a monument because he carried into effect what Kaufmann planned.

The present viceroy is Lieutenant-General Samsonoff, a man of great ability and energy, and his deputy is Lieutenant-General Dokotillo, who is also making a reputation.

The governor-general has a palace, as it is called, but you cannot see much of it because it is hidden by a high wall painted white, with green panels. The house is painted green, with white trimmings, and is simple and modest and without the slightest ostentation. It is by no means

imposing, but is said to be handsomely furnished and comfortable. It is of stone, of a single story, surrounding several courts and covering a large area. It was built by General Kaufmann and is intended more for comfort than display. Each of the courts has a wide portico or cloister to temper the heat, which is intense in the summer, and all the rooms are large and high. There is no throne room or audience chamber, but a ballroom, 30 by 52 feet in size, is used about once a year for a state reception. The dining room is 20 by 32 feet. A lounging or smoking room is really the finest apartment in the palace, having a wainscotting and frieze of exquisite Oriental wood carving, divans, upholstery, and window hangings of native velvet made in Bokhara.

The yarin padishah, or viceroy, makes no attempt at display and offers very little hospitality, either to the natives or the Russian residents. From a social point of view the administration of Turkestan is in striking contrast to that of India, where the viceroy is surrounded by much pomp and ceremony and where the etiquette is even more strict than at Buckingham Palace or Potsdam. The viceroy of India holds regular levees, at which the native princes, the rajahs, and maharajahs appear in their royal robes, loaded with jewels, and are entertained with ostentatious ceremony; but at Tashkend all such things are omitted except on New Year's day, when the governor general receives both Russian and native citizens in a manner as informal as the receptions of the President of the United States. The palace is surrounded by several acres of gardens, orchards, and groves, all enclosed by a high wall which extends back into the native city. The only fortification

in the neighbourhood occupies an eminence upon the opposite side of a wide street and commands the native city.

The viceroy, or "half king," as the natives call him, has a large staff of civil and military officials, mostly generals and other men of high rank, whose wives and daughters constitute an official hierarchy, like the imperial court or as near as possible. There are dances, teas, card parties, private theatricals, amateur concerts, and various other amusements at the military club, which are attended by the families of the army officers, who are divided into cliques, coteries, and sets as in other military stations. The military etiquette is very severe, and the customs of St. Petersburg prevail in official society to a degree that is amusing. The civilian population have no special position, although if they happen to have attractive daughters they are made welcome at the balls and garden parties. The morals of the people are ignored, but religious holidays are strictly observed.

The viceroy has absolute and autocratic power and is responsible only to the Czar, who appoints and can remove him, but thus far has never interfered with his administration. I do not know of any other civilized ruler on the face of the earth who is so independent of all criticism and restraint as the viceroy of Turkestan. The viceroy of India is always under fire from critics in England and India, both natives and Englishmen, whose partisanship provokes them to comment favourably or unfavourably in books, newspapers, magazines, and upon the lecture platform, upon everything he does, according as it happens to suit their views. The viceroy of India is the victim of a par-

liament also and a council for Indian affairs, as well as the colonial department of the government. The civil authorities in India are in continual friction with the military, and on the 1st of January, 1910, a council of state, one half of whom are natives elected by the people, was installed to criticise as well as to coöperate with him. The viceroy of Turkestan is not troubled with any of these afflictions, but is an absolute dictator, civil and military. No one asks him questions. Although he is assisted by a council, that body seldom offers him advice unless it is asked for, and the ministry at St. Petersburg have nothing to say concerning his administration one way or the other.

There is a parade ground immediately in front of the palace, surrounded by a double row of poplar trees, and upon the opposite side is a gorgeous church with yellow walls and five turquoise domes embellished with gilt, which is intended especially for the soldiers. A military mass is celebrated there every Sunday morning and always upon holidays and saints' days.

We were fortunate in being able to witness the open-air ceremonies upon the parade ground in front of the palace upon the emperor's birthday, but they did not amount to much. No enthusiasm was displayed and it looked as if Nicholas II is not getting all the respect that should be coming to him. The city was liberally decorated with Russian flags, but no salute was fired. There was probably some reason for the omission, but I could not get an explanation. The church bells woke up all the population at an early hour in the morning, early mass was sung in all the churches as on Sunday, and a special service was held in the military church at 9 o'clock which was at-

tended by all of the officials, civil and military. The introduction of several children's voices added much to the effect of the music.

While the mass was being celebrated, the native officials gathered on the parade ground — the mayor, the magistrates, and other functionaries being dressed in long velvet gowns of bright colours. All of them wore several decorations and medals, which have been freely bestowed, and in their snowy white turbans, their long beards, and dignified demeanour, they made an impressive scene. But the service was long, the day was hot, and velvet robes are thick and heavy. They stood it as long as they could on the parade ground and then sought the shade of the trees, where they squatted on the ground and waited until the viceroy appeared.

He came from the church at the close of the service with more haste than dignity, followed by enough generals to command an army corps, and, as soon as the soldiers were arranged in a hollow square on the four sides of the parade ground, he reviewed them, walking rapidly across the four sides and proposing a cheer for the emperor every time he reached a new company.

When this ceremony had been completed he approached the native officials, who were ranged in a group according to their rank, and listened impatiently to a tedious speech from the eldest of the elder statesmen. The first time the old man stopped to catch his breath the viceroy broke in upon him in a most abrupt manner, promising to telegraph his kind words of congratulations and expressions of loyalty to the emperor that very day. Then he bowed abruptly, wheeled about, and, followed by a platoon of generals,

strode hurriedly across the parade ground and disappeared within the palace door.

Tashkend covers an area as large as that of Paris, for every house in the Russian quarter stands in a large compound amid trees and gardens and is surrounded by high walls. No city has more luxuriant foliage. The soil is so fertile that any kind of a stick will grow if it is stuck in the ground and well watered. The modern city, at least six miles square, is one great grove, which has sprung up from seeds and seedlings planted by the Russians within the last forty-five years. The growth is extraordinary. There are acres after acres of full sized oaks, walnuts, elms, lindens, ash, several varieties of maples, horse chestnuts, and mulberries and one variety, with far spreading branches, small leaves, and very thick foliage, which I have never seen before. The natives call it the "kara-kitchi," which means black ash, and it makes one of the finest shade trees I have ever seen. The government has done remarkable work in forestation. It is asserted that more than 60,000,000 trees have been planted upon the deserts of Central Asia since the first occupation in 1868, and everyone who has seen the groves that surround the railway stations, the long colonnades of poplars that line the streets of the new Russian towns, the parks and private grounds can well believe the statement. It is a disappointment, however, that I have not been able to find anyone willing to assert that this forestation has had a beneficial effect upon the climate or the rainfall. Everybody believes that the trees are promoters of health and comfort, but no meteorological changes have been noticed.

GLIMPSE OF A RESIDENCE IN THE NATIVE CITY OF TASHKEND.

The Russian part of Tashkend is a city of magnificent distances, and it is certainly to the credit of the Russian government that the land thus occupied was not confiscated from the conquered natives, but was purchased from them for a fair price and resold to Russian immigrants after a sufficient area had been reserved for administrative buildings, military barracks, parks, schoolhouses, churches, and other semi-public purposes. The value of the land was so small at that time that everybody bought by the acre instead of the lot, which accounts for the large groves and gardens that surround every house. But real estate is beginning to command high rates, and in the business section of the city has sold as high as $5 a square yard.

There is plenty of water from the River Sura, a branch of the Kerashan, and irrigating ditches of running water on both sides of every street cool the atmosphere as well as encourage the vegetation, and men with buckets dip from the flowing gutters and douse the streets as in India. This is very acceptable in the summer months, for it does not rain between April and November. Where the roads are not sprinkled the dust is fearful, and in winter the mud is equally disagreeable.

Most of the streets are 160 feet wide, there are brick or stone sidewalks and a driveway in the centre is usually macadamized. The large compounds, the high walls, and the far-spreading residences resemble the foreign settlements of Delhi, Lucknow, Lahore, and other cities of India and China. Most of the buildings are of one story to accommodate the earthquakes, and every one, except the shops which have show windows opening on the sidewalks, is enclosed in high walls and concealed by shade trees. These

"compounds," as the enclosures are called, usually contain the business offices and warehouses of the owner as well as his residence. The business office usually opens on the street. The residence is in the centre of the compound and surrounded by gardens, orchards, strawberry beds, and lawns. There are several fine schoolhouses in the Russian quarter for the benefit of the children of the civil and military officers. One side of the public park is occupied by large buildings in which academies, art schools, technical schools, and other branches of secondary and higher education are maintained. Each building occupies the entire front of the block. One is for boys and the other is for girls.

The city is thoroughly equipped with electric lights and with running water. There are telephones and street cars which are very much needed, because the distances are so great, and almost every part of the city, the native section, the railway station, the cemetery, and all other points where people want to go are reached by them. The cars are rudely made, but are open, and the first three seats are reserved for Europeans who pay double fare to avoid the crowding, the odours, and the creeping things which are said to be caught from the natives. Droskys like those in St. Petersburg and Moscow are numerous and cheap, and the ichvostniks are gorgeous fellows, wearing sleeveless liveries of dark velvet over silk tunics of bright colours adorned with filigree buttons of silver and gilt. The horses are not so good as those of Russia proper, except those driven by the government officials and the rich merchants, among whom there is a good deal of rivalry. Ordinary horses and cattle are very poor. The beef is miserable and tough and scarcely fit to eat. Strangers avoid it and the natives can-

not be very much tempted by the samples that hang in front of the butcher-shops. Mutton is much better.

In the modern city are fine shops filled with merchandise with attractive show windows. Prices are very high compared with those in Moscow and St. Petersburg, because of customs taxes and long transportation. Nothing is cheap but vegetables and fruits. Every other form of merchandise costs more than in Europe. Wages of Europeans are very high. A Russian labourer or servant expects twice or three times as much as he gets at home, but the wages of natives are low, 25 and 30 cents a day being the maximum. There are three daily newspapers, which receive brief news despatches from Europe, chiefly about Russian affairs.

There is a modest museum, which contains valuable collections of Turkestan archæology, but they are not catalogued or arranged with any system. The objects are covered with dust and the place seems to be uncared for. It would be an easy task to fill a museum with the relics of the prehistoric races who occupied this section of the world, but the Russians do not seem to take any interest in the subject.

Attached to the museum is a national library containing the largest and best collection of works, in all languages, concerning Central Asia that can be found anywhere, and it includes not only books and pamphlets but magazines and newspaper articles. This library was started by General Kaufmann, the first viceroy, and was increased by General Kuropatkin, his successor, but the present generation of officials are not inclined to literary affairs and have made few additions.

There are several theatres and cheap cinematograph

shows for the diversion of the soldiers, and they seem to be well patronized. There are numerous cafés and clubs and the government subsidizes an opera during the winter season, all for the benefit of the military element, and to make them contented.

There are several large churches. One in particular, which serves as a cathedral for the orthodox Greek bishop, with a bell tower or campanile, was built by the late Emperor Alexander III, who, as you remember, was very religious, and a marble tablet inscribed with gilt letters tells of his generosity and his interest in the spiritual welfare of his Asiatic subjects. Back of this church is an entire block covered with barracks for the infantry. And, indeed, it is unnecessary to ask the use for any large building, because the answer is usually the same. The military garrison of Tashkend is between 15,000 and 20,000 men.

A considerable part of the buildings in the city are devoted to the military and civil administrations, but as there are no signs to distinguish public and private premises all buildings look alike to strangers. It is impossible to distinguish them.

There are two hotels, and one of them, where we were stopping, is managed by a vivacious soubrette who was a popular stage favourite until a year or so ago, when she married one of the richest merchants in town, who owns the largest shop and was also proprietor of the hotel. The manager immediately had trouble with madam, and quit. She then undertook to run things herself, and you can imagine the consequences. It is a common saying that anybody can run a hotel or a newspaper, because everybody knows how to do it, and a singing and dancing soubrette

is probably more competent than people who have been trained in other professions.

In Turkestan a hotel is called a "gastinitza," and madam, who is strictly a "live wire," gave us a continuous performance not only of comedy, but of tragedy, melodrama, and farce. If she would direct some of her fascinations upon the servants instead of upon her guests the discipline might be improved, for the cook is seldom at home, the other servants are in a chronic state of mutiny, and nothing is certain or permanent except madam's musical voice, which can be heard continuously through the corridors from morning till night. She never stops talking, but nobody seems to mind what she says. Tennyson's "Brook" isn't a circumstance to her conversation. But, after all, the hotel is comfortable, the rooms are large and airy, the furniture is new and abundant, and even if the cook does not come to get dinner until 8 o'clock in the evening, you are always sure of a warm meal before you go to bed if you only have the patience to sit up and wait for it. In that latitude the twilights are long and you can sit out on the sidewalk until midnight waiting for your supper.

The Tashkend nightingale, or bull-bull, is an institution peculiar to the place, and it has the only voice that can outscream the landlady. The irrigation ditches that flow through every street are filled with frogs, and they make the night merry barking like dogs, squealing like little pigs, croaking like ravens, and making a rap-a-tap like woodpeckers. They are deep-lunged creatures, no larger than ordinary frogs, but can be heard for half a mile, and the first question a resident asks a visitor is:

"Did the bull-bulls keep you awake all night?"

The chief vehicle used by the native is a wide cart on two immense wheels called an "arba." The wheels are constructed of elm wood and are usually about eight feet high, with wide felloes and heavy spokes. The shafts are extensions of the wooden beams which run under the body of the vehicle and are supported by a saddle on the back of the horse, where the driver always sits instead of in the cart. Sometimes the arbas are covered with framework and matting, and, although springless, they are not uncomfortable, because the great size of the wheels counteracts the inequalities of the road. There are various theories as to the size of the wheels, that generally accepted being that it is to enable them to ford streams without wetting their cargoes. We had a good deal of amusement asking teamsters from time to time why the wheels of their carts were so large. One of them answered promptly:

"Because we like them that way."

The population of the city of Tashkend at the only census that was ever taken was found to be 167,000, but it is probably nearer 180,000 to-day, of whom about 12,000 are Russians, not including soldiers.

The old city of Tashkend is the largest of all the communities of Central Asia, and no other presents so many interesting features. The walls are said to have been sixteen miles in length, but are preserved only in spots. They were built of blocks of clay and then plastered over, fifteen feet high and twenty-four feet thick at the base and about twelve feet at the top, where there was a narrow path or platform protected by thinner walls so low that the soldiers could shoot over them. There were formerly twelve gates, but most of them have been taken down.

The city is divided into four parts known as Shaikantaur. Bish Agatche, Koktchi, and Sibzar, which were formerly separate towns and gradually grew together. Each, however, preserves its municipal independence and is governed by an aksakal (meaning literally a gray-beard) or elder, and has its own police and separate municipal administration. The inhabitants are known as Sarts, which was originally a term of contempt for an effeminate person, but has grown to mean the inhabitants of cities as distinguished from horsemen of the plains. The term, however, is now only applied to the inhabitants of the former khanate at Samarkand to distinguish them from the people of Khiva, Bokhara, and other neighbours. They had the same ancestors as the Germans and Slavonians and have occupied this country from a time so far back that no one can count the centuries or the generations.

Their language is similar to that of Bokhara and is called Uzbek, a term applied to the descendants of ninety-two clans or tribes in Central Asia, but the dialects vary according to their contact with the other races. Thus those who live nearer the Persian border use many Persian words: those who live near China show the influence in their conversation, and those who live down toward India have many terms and phrases in common. There is a written language and a limited literature. The gospels have been translated into Uzbek.

The total Sart population, including about seventy-five thousand inhabitants of Samarkand and 140,000 of Tashkend, is estimated at about six hundred thousand. This includes many Jews who drifted there after the dispersion, and during the captivity, from Babylon and other places;

many Persians who were originally brought as slaves; Hindus, Arabs, Armenians, and large numbers of Tartars. Of the 600,000 probably not more than two-thirds are pure Sart.

The existence of Tashkend, like that of all these cities of Central Asia, is due to the Sura River, which comes down from the mountains of China and waters a large area of uncommonly fertile soil. The water supply of Tashkend is the most abundant in all Turkestan. The mountains from which this water comes, called the Tchatkal, are only thirty miles away and contribute much to the beauty of the landscape. Beyond Tashkend to the eastward there are no more deserts for several hundred miles until the great Desert of Gobi is reached.

The native city is intersected by hundreds of canals and streams which water beautiful gardens, and looking from a height it would seem that ancient Tashkend was buried under foliage. More than half the houses are concealed by the boughs of trees, and in wandering about the narrow, crooked streets we frequently came to a rushing stream with trees leaning over the waters. Funny old flour mills are found everywhere with rude wheels that are turned by the force of the water. From the axles of these wheels large wooden teeth project, and, as they are turned, huge beams drop from one tooth to another. This causes them to teeter, and being swung on a pivot in the middle, the farther end, which is shod with iron, keeps dropping incessantly into a square mortar and pulverizes the wheat or other grain which has been placed there.

The Syr Daria, or River Syr (the word Daria means a stream of water), was described by Strabo, the ancient

Greek geographer, as flowing into the Caspian Sea, which indicates that the Sea of Aral was at that time a part of the Caspian, as I described in a previous chapter. The river was called the Jaxartes by the Greeks, and Alexander the Great found it difficult to cross with his army. It rises in China, in the mountains of the Tizan-Shan, at an elevation of 11,000 feet, and receives the waters of many mountain streams, fed from the glaciers and snowbanks. This is the cause of a phenomenon not often noticed. The size and rapidity of the stream are very much greater late in the afternoon and early evening than in the morning, the volume of water being twice as much at those hours, which is due to the melting snows under the hot sun during midday. After leaving the mountains of China the Syr wanders about the desert furnishing life and health and sustenance for about 3,000,000 people, and creating several important oases in Ferghana and the easternmost part of Turkestan. It is perpetual, and, what is more important, the volume of water is much greater in the summer, when it is needed, than in the winter, when people can get along without much moisture. If every river could be disciplined on that basis it would save a great deal of anxiety and pecuniary loss.

The houses of the natives of Tashkend, like those of other cities in Turkestan, are built of mud, and a few of them are covered with plaster and washed with some brilliant calcimine. Pink and blue seem to be favourite tints, but every shade you can imagine is used, which gives a street a cheerful and agreeable appearance. The roofs are made of poplar rafters overlaid with willow branches entwined closely together. They are then thatched with reeds, alternating with layers of clay and sod to a thickness of fifteen or

eighteen inches. The top layer soon becomes a garden, sowed with seeds blown about in the air, and is embellished with poppies, wild geraniums, and other flowers during the summer. But when the rainy season comes in the autumn the roof is sometimes washed away.

Native Tashkend is the cleanest Oriental city I have ever seen, which perhaps is due to the fact that there is plenty of water from the Sura River, which flows by a dozen channels through the most thickly settled sections, and everybody can use as much as he pleases. Every few blocks you come across a swift, running stream. The streets are well kept, the children have clean faces and clean garments and are neatly dressed like the Japanese. They are clothed like grown people, wearing the same pattern of garments, and imitate them in their manners. Their gravity is amusing. You never saw anything more solemn than a Sart baby, unless it is a Japanese infant, and instead of running after strangers and clamouring for "backsheesh," as the children of other Eastern cities do, the boys and girls of Tashkend return your greetings with the grace of a Chesterfield and are as serious as undertakers.

The boys have big, thoughtful eyes and handsome features. The little girls are very attractive except when they have rings in their noses, as some of them do. It is considered a great attraction to have a ring in the cartilage between the nostrils. Their hair is braided in twenty or thirty small strands, each of which is tied with a ribbon at the end. The girls go with uncovered faces until they are 12 years old, but after that age even the beggar women wear strips of horsehair cloth with wide meshes sewed into their shawls so that they can be drawn down over their

A SART FAMILY AT TASHKEND.

faces. This is much more comfortable than the thick cloth veils worn by women in other Mohammedan countries, as it enables them to see clearly and gives them air.

The Sarts pay a great deal of attention to their children, to their deportment as well as their appearance, and are as assiduous in their instruction as the Japanese. They are not highly educated, but it is said that every man and woman can at least read and write. In this they are very different from the other tribes of Central Asia, which are usually illiterate.

There are no beggars in Tashkend, which is a great relief. There are no loathsome creatures to excite sympathy, such as obtrude upon a stranger in other Oriental cities, whichever way he turns, and in that aspect also Tashkend is like Japan.

The bazaars are as clean and neat and well arranged as those of Kyoto and Tokio, and are the largest and best I have ever seen, better than those of Cairo, or Damascus, or even Constantinople. They are said to include 4,500 shops for the sale of different classes of goods, each class having its own section and street for the convenience of buyers. There is very little in the way of curios. Most of the merchandise is made in Moscow or other Russian cities. There is a prohibitory tariff against German, English, and Austrian goods, and commercial travellers from other countries than Russia are not permitted in the country. The government proposes that its own merchants and manufacturers shall have every advantage that the country offers, and ever since the occupation the commercial and manufacturing interests of Russia have had the active coöperation of the officials in introducing their goods.

We saw very few women, and those were so swathed in wraps that they did not look like human beings; but the men are worth looking at. Their top coats are rainbows of silk or cotton, wide stripes of the most brilliant colours, and under them are worn shirts and trousers of cotton or wool and a tunic of silk or cotton — red, yellow, orange, green, pink, blue, or perhaps all these colours combined — reaching to the knees. The legs and feet are usually bare, except for a pair of sandals or pumps which the wearer kicks off at every opportunity. Some of the swell natives try to imitate European customs and wear high Russian boots, which look very uncomfortable and inappropriate to the rest of the costume. Everybody wears little skull caps like those worn by the Cardinals of Rome, and they are embroidered with gold and silver braid or silks of brilliant colours. The cap shops are among the most numerous and attractive in the bazaars.

The most interesting individual in Russian Tashkend, even more interesting than the viceroy or his deputy, is the Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaievitch, a second cousin of Emperor Nicholas, and a grandson of Nicholas I, the Iron Czar. He was banished to Turkestan because of a terrible scandal and afterward aggravated his offense by marrying the daughter of the chief of police at Orenberg. He is allowed to go about freely in the province, but must always ask the permission of the viceroy, equivalent to a ticket of leave, and which, of course, is a terrible humiliation to any man of high degree. He is not allowed to wear a uniform because he was a disgrace to the army, and that is an even greater cause of mortification than the other. He has tried in vain to persuade Nicholas II to revoke or

modify the edict of exile pronounced upon him by Alexander III, but cannot even get permission to visit St. Petersburg. When his father died some years ago he was not allowed to attend the funeral.

It is said that his troubles have weakened his mind, and people consider him a crank, but of a very good sort. Fortunately his mania is benevolence. He keeps busy, enjoys life, and spends the greater part of his time and his money doing good. He inherited great wealth, but his estate is in the hands of trustees, and he is permitted to spend only the income which, after meeting his living expenses, and for a grand duke they are not extravagant, is devoted entirely to improving the condition of the Russian peasants in this part of the empire. His trustees do not interfere with his benevolent work, but rather encourage it, and have assisted him in carrying out an extensive and expensive irrigating scheme upon the Golodnaya steppe, or "Hungry Desert," as a strip of barren and desolate country, eighty miles west of Tashkend, is called. It is the most forlorn and hopeless looking spot in all Turkestan, as you may infer from the name, and Constantine Nicholaievitch has invested several million dollars in a plant that irrigates about 6,000 acres and has located upon the land 800 families of peasants, mostly from the valley of the Volga in European Russia, who are engaged in raising cotton and are doing well. The irrigation system is being gradually extended as fast as the duke's means will permit, and before it is completed will have redeemed 10,000 to 12,000 acres of desert, and will have located upon it 1,200 to 1,500 families and added annually to the product of Turkestan about 20,000 bales of cotton worth about $1,000,000. Such a contribution

to the wealth of his country, you must admit, is a very good record for a banished duke and a crank.

His imperial highness resides in an artistic but modest mansion in the centre of the city, not far from the viceroy, and occupies an entire block of ground enclosed by a lofty iron fence painted a bright scarlet. At each corner of the ground is a one-story building of gray brick with window frames, doors, and trimmings and all woodwork painted the same vivid colour. At one corner is a stable, an attractive piece of architecture. The outside walls are ornamented with medallions in stone from which project the heads of horses and each of them is a portrait of a favourite animal of the owner. All the woodwork about the stable is painted red. There is no other colour of paint on the place, which is all the more striking because of the dense green foliage which rises from behind the scarlet fence. There is a well-cultivated vegetable and flower garden, an orchard of fruit trees, a tennis court, a bowling green, and a croquet ground, all of them very attractive; and the rest of the block is covered with splendid trees, none more than fifty years old but all of them as large as if they had been growing five centuries.

On the outside of the fence, on the sidewalk, are wooden benches such as you see in public parks and they are painted red also. They are intended to furnish a place where tired peasants who pass that way in a continuous procession during the hours of daylight between the country and the markets of Tashkend may sit down for a while and rest. This is one of the idiosyncrasies of the owner; one instance of his thoughtfulness for the comfort and welfare of the poor; and they call him a crank. His charity for his fellow

men, who have been very severe in their criticism of his conduct, is all the more generous because it is applied to other races as well as to his own, and he spends ten times as much money for the welfare of others as he does for himself.

Like all other houses in this earthquaky region, the palace of the Grand Duke Constantine is a one-story building, highly ornate in its decorations, particularly the façade. It looks more like a museum than a private house and the deception is heightened by the fact that the front porch, which extends the entire length of the house, has been shut in with large glass windows, creating a sun parlour which is half filled with curios and works of art. On either side of the doorway is a marble stag in an alert attitude, as if listening to the footsteps of a hunter creeping among the leaves. A wide, heavily-shaded driveway leads from the street to the front door of the mansion. All of the woodwork there is also a bright vermilion — thus carrying out practically a threat which his imperial highness is said to have made to his cousin, the late Alexander III, at the time of his banishment, that he would paint things red wherever they sent him.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COTTON INDUSTRY IN TURKESTAN

TURKESTAN is about the last place in the world that anyone would look for a portrait of Theodore Roosevelt, but I found one in Tashkend on the Fourth of July — hanging upon the walls of a modest but comfortable mansion situated on the outskirts of the capital of Turkestan, surrounded by a garden, an orchard, and a grove of grand trees which look centuries old, but are really quite modern, like everything else in the Russian quarter. You often hear it said that the world is not very wide — a fact which I am prepared to prove by frequent experiences and by the picture of our strenuous ex-President ornamenting the home of a Russian admirer 1,300 miles east of the Caspian Sea, on the western borders of the Chinese Empire; but fame has no geographical limits.

Coming up on the train, a very agreeable gentleman connected with the finance department of the Russian government at Samarkand told us he had a friend at Tashkend who had formerly lived in New York and offered a letter of introduction to him, which was gladly accepted, particularly because he suggested that perhaps his friend was the only man at the capital who could speak English. As the address was written in Russian characters it had no meaning to us, and it was not until we had been in Tashkend for several days that we decided to present it — which turned

out to be a mistake. Having exhausted the interesting features of the town, there was nothing left except to pay our respects to the only citizen who could speak English, and after a drive of fifteen minutes behind a swift horse — which indicates the area of Tashkend — we were shown into a one-story office building at the corner of a large compound. Handing the letter of introduction and my card to an attendant, I was led through a long hall, and there, seated behind an American roll-top desk, to my astonishment, was Vladimir Gnesin, a genial Russian friend whom I had known in the United States, and who has many friends in New York, Washington, and other cities. He lived in New York for nine years as the representative of the great Yaroslav Cotton Company of Moscow, the oldest establishment of the kind in Russia, which was founded in 1722 under the patronage of Peter the Great to manufacture linen sails for his ships.

The history of the Yaroslav company has recently been published in two large folio volumes, beautifully illustrated with designs of table cloths, napkins, and other ornamental fabrics for which it was famous a century and a half ago. It was a linen mill and also made writing paper and other stationery until 1856. Then it was turned into a cotton factory, with American machinery, and has been running exclusively with American cotton until the last few years, but the cotton industry has been developed in Turkestan very largely, owing to the encouragement of this company. Now about one-half of its supply of raw material comes from Turkestan, and the balance from the United States, and the average annual value of the finished product of the Yaroslav

company is about 32,000,000 roubles, or $16,000,000 in our money.

The company has about two thousand acres of plantations in Turkestan, twelve ginneries and compresses at different stations along the railway, and cotton-seed-oil mills at Khiva and other points, all equipped with American machinery.

"The output of cotton in Turkestan," said Mr. Gnesin in answer to my questions, "is increasing slowly but surely. Further expansion depends upon irrigation, which requires large capital and cannot be done by men of small means. A unique proposition in political economy is soon to be tried in Turkestan, and the experiment, I am sure, will be watched with great interest by the people of your country.

"The Russian duma," continued Mr. Gnesin, "will impose a special tax of 50 kopeks (25 cents) per pood (thirty-six pounds) upon all raw cotton produced in the empire, the proceeds of which are to be paid into a special fund for the purpose of improving and extending the cultivation of cotton in Turkestan, for fighting grasshoppers and other plagues, and for protecting the planters wherever they require protection. Experimental stations are to be established; the best qualities of seed are to be distributed among the planters; local banks are to be provided with funds to loan money in small sums to farmers who are willing to start new plantations; and other means will be used under the authority of this new law which may suggest themselves from time to time.

"This tax is recommended by the manufacturers themselves, who will have to pay it, because the amount will be added to the normal price of raw cotton, but the money will ultimately come out of the pockets of the public instead

of the farmers, who have the direct benefit. There is a proviso, however, that the money shall be expended by government agents under the supervision of a committee appointed by the Cotton Manufacturers' Association. Without their approval the officials cannot spend a cent. As a precedent this law and the movement behind it are very important, as you will realize. It is entirely unique, but if it is successful it may be possible to use similar means for encouraging other interests.

"The manufacturers of Moscow are organizing a company to raise capital for irrigation projects in Turkestan," said Mr. Gnesin, "so as to extend the area of cotton culture. In order to do this it is necessary to reclaim desert lands. Immigrants cannot obtain cultivated farms. The laws prohibit them from buying land of natives. This policy of the Russian government is intended to prevent any complications growing out of the invasion of native rights and property ownership by Russians. Hence those who come here to undertake farming must open new districts. There is plenty of water, but capital is needed, and it requires a good deal of money to build a new irrigation plant.

"All machinery used here in the cotton business is American," said Mr. Gnesin; "the gins, linters, compresses, filing machines, cotton seed oil machinery, and everything else, are mostly from Massachusetts and Connecticut manufactories. The Russian government has an establishment just across the road from my office for selling American machinery and implements at cost and on long credit to the peasants. If you will go over there you will feel quite at home, because every machine and every tool in the

warehouse was made in your country, and brought here across the whole of Europe and half of Asia for the use of the peasants of Turkestan.

"Richard Schroeder is the chief of the government experiment station at Tashkend and the bureau of instruction at which peasants are taught to use American tools and machinery. His father was a Dane, imported from Denmark by the Russian government seventy-five years ago as director of horticulture in the agricultural department, and he organized the agricultural college at Moscow, with which he was connected for more than half a century. His son, Richard Schroeder, succeeded him and was sent out here to promote cotton culture in Turkestan. He has done great work and has been remarkably successful. The peasants are buying more and more of American tools and machinery, but they are very conservative. They are always reluctant to adopt innovations, and their farms are usually so small that they do not require much machinery. American steam plows, threshing machines, self-binders, traction engines, and other machinery can be used to advantage only upon the large estates."

"Is cotton raised in any other part of Russia?" I asked.

"Yes, some is produced in the Trans-Caucasus province and farmers in the neighbourhood of Odessa are trying to raise it. There is an experimental station there under the direction of Mr. Rotnitroff, from the department of agriculture, which is producing good results.

"It is the ambition of the Russian government and the manufacturers as well," continued Mr. Gnesin, "to raise enough raw material within the empire to supply all our cotton factories, so that we shall not be dependent upon

A YOUNG MAN OF TASHKEND.

THE BELLE OF OLD TASHKEND IN WEDDING COSTUME.

the United States or any other foreign country. We have been much more successful than the English or the Germans, who are making similar efforts in Africa. We now produce nearly one half of the raw material consumed in Russia. The experiments in southern Russia, the Trans-Caucasus and in Armenia have been only comparatively successful, but in Turkestan there is no doubt of the adaptability of the soil and the climatic conditions. We now produce from six hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand bales, and it is all from American seed except that grown in Bokhara. The government originally imported the seed and distributed it among the planters. To-day the greater part of the seed used in Turkestan comes from the emperor's plantation near Merv.

"There is a curious situation in Bokhara," said Mr. Gnesin, "where the planters still continue to raise native cotton, although they would prefer American cotton, which they realize is much more profitable. But they cannot plant American seed because the bolls open of themselves whenever they are ripe, and if the fibre is not picked promptly it falls out and is ruined. The planters of Bokhara are not permitted to pick their cotton until the government officials come around to assess the crop for taxation, and they take their own time. If the assessor delays too long the planter is likely to lose his whole crop, but the native cotton remains in the boll and therefore is safe; and they cannot take any chances. They have appealed to the emir, but he declined to intervene because the taxes are farmed out in Bokhara, and the contractor likes to manage his own business. The planters then appealed to the Russian government, but it is contrary to its fixed policy to interfere in such matters.

Finally, the planters appealed to the manufacturers of Moscow, and the directors of the Yaroslav Cotton Company sent for Mr. Gardner of the Brown Gin Company of New London, Conn., who made a study of the situation and invented a machine to pick the native cotton from the bolls, which do not open by themselves naturally. Thus the planters have been able to materially reduce the cost of picking the native product. The assessor does not come around any sooner and the planter still has to wait until he comes; but the largest item of expense in producing the native cotton has been reduced by Mr. Gardner's machine and the planters are doing almost as well as if they were raising the American staple."

The native farmers, who raise the great cotton crops and other staples of Turkestan, do not live upon their plantations but, according to the common custom in Asia and eastern Europe, they live together in villages, because, in olden times, this was necessary for mutual protection from roving marauders. They go to and from their work in the morning and evening and, if the distance is great, they sometimes build rude huts in the fields, take their rations with them, and "live out," as they say, until the planting or the harvesting is finished; and from the car windows or from the carriage as we drive around we can see the rude huts of brush or sod or mud where they sleep.

The inhabited parts of Central Asia are separated by great stretches of desert, but there are strips of fertile and cultivated land wherever water can be brought. A Sart proverb says: "Drop upon drop makes a sea, but where there are no drops there is a desert." There is practically no rain. No drop of moisture falls from the sky in summer,

and only occasionally a little snow or a shower in the winter. The maximum precipitation is eight or nine inches, and sometimes not more than an inch or two of rain will be recorded for several years in succession. The proportion of rain increases as you travel eastward. The nearer you get to the mountains water becomes more plentiful, and finally, as you reach the foothills, it is abundant. These mountains mark the boundaries, first of Persia, then Afghanistan, and then China; and Tashkend is only a short distance from the western limits of that great empire.

There are said to be valuable mineral deposits through the entire ranges and that must be the case, because the ancients were rich in gold, copper, silver, and precious stones. Thirty miles east of Samarkand is a group of well built, solid looking structures south of the railway track, with overhead trolley wires running down toward the foothills, where they disappear in the distance. The buildings seemed to be idle and unoccupied and there was no sign of life around them. We were told that they were the remains of an attempt to develop a coal deposit made by a German named Bauer, who spent 2,000,000 roubles trying to mine coal and bring it to the railway, a distance of thirty miles. His money gave out before his enterprise became self-sustaining, and he was compelled to give it up. The premises are strewn with dead boilers and other machinery, as the desert is on either side with the bones of camels and cattle.

There certainly is coal and other minerals near by, but the Russian government does not encourage, and, in fact, throws every possible obstacle in the way of, their development. The general policy is to prevent, and even prohibit, the invasion of this country by speculators and adventurers

who will be certain to interfere with the affairs of the natives and the designs of the government. Bona fide irrigation enterprises and colonies of Russian peasants to utilize them are encouraged in every way, but a prospector for minerals is apt to perish before he gets very far.

Water is of greater value than gold and the development of the water supply is the only investment that can be made safely in Turkestan.

It is the wonder of wonders how the armies of ancient times crossed the deserts of Central Asia — deserts that closely resemble Death Valley of California and the lifeless plains of Nevada. Yet Tamerlane was followed by 200,000 warriers on his march to India; Alexander the Great mustered more than sixty thousand; and other invaders of ancient days had similar numbers of soldiers who must have carried all their supplies with them. The country could furnish them nothing. Forage raids would be wasted there. We know that Alexander the Great, whose adventures were recorded fully and accurately, transported water in goat skins as they carry wine in Greece and Macedonia, but how could he carry rations for 60,000 men across 2,000 miles of desert?

The waste of camels on these expeditions has been terrible. That long-suffering beast can travel nine days without a drink, but sometimes becomes exhausted and lies down upon the desert sands. General Schobeleff, in his expedition against Merv in 1881, started with a pack train of 12,000 camels and at the end of the campaign had 600 living. The bones of the remainder may still be seen scattered along his trail. General Kaufmann started for the siege of Khiva with 10,000 camels and 10,000 horses and reached his

destination with about 1,200 of both. Similar other expeditions have made similar sacrifices.

The first description we have of this country was written by a Chinese traveller named Hiouen T'Sang, who visited Central Asia between 630 and 640 A.D., and wrote elaborate accounts of his observations and experiences. He crossed the Golodnaya, or "Hungry Steppe," which has been the most dreaded and dangerous portion of the desert of Kizil-Kum for 2,000 years, and writes that "one enters into a great sandy plain where neither water nor grass is to be found. It is necessary to look at some high mountain in the distance, and seek for abandoned bones, to know how to guide oneself, and recognize the trails to be followed."

This is the section which the Grand Duke Constantine is trying to reclaim by means of a canal cut through a mountain pass, by which water may be brought from the River Zarafshan. There are traces of old canals and ditches in several places on the desert, showing that it was cultivated at one time, but Tch'ang-Tch'un, who passed through the same region in 1222, makes no mention of agriculture, therefore whatever farming was done there must have been during the period between the visits of the two Chinese, which were nearly six hundred years apart. Perhaps an earthquake occurring in the meantime may have lifted the surface of the plain above the reach of water.

It is a curious freak of nature that whenever the rain does fall, and there is a smart shower every year or two, immeasurable beds of scarlet poppies will spring up like a miracle, similar to the flowers that always bloom after a rainfall on the deserts along the west coast of South America. How did the seed come there, and where did it come from? are

two questions which the botanists have never answered. But you will remember, perhaps, that wherever the pioneer railroad builders in Kansas, Indian Territory, and other parts of the Southwest of the United States turned up the sod beds of wild geraniums sprang up immediately to cover the wounds that the picks and the spades had made in the breast of mother earth.

The Chinese writers to whom I have referred both speak of venomous spiders and other insects as infesting the "Hungry Steppe," but they are not noticeable to-day, so that some means of extermination must have been practised.

In the midst of the "Hungry Desert" are the ruins of a great caravanserai, called Murgah Raybat, supposed to have been built between 1590 and 1600 by Abdullah Khan, one of the most famous and progressive rulers in the history of Central Asia. He did much to promote commerce between the east and the west and provided similar accommodations for travellers and caravans at other points on the desert. Here the camel trains could stop and rest and renew their supplies of water and food. For hundreds of years the traffic was enormous. The building was square, of a single story, with a central court, covered by a squatty dome and surrounded by rooms for the accommodation of travellers and their merchandise, each being covered by a smaller dome, a miniature of the large one, In the cellar was a cistern or sardoba, as it was called, fed from several brackish wells, and from this the caravans obtained their supplies of water. It must have been an imposing building when it was in condition, and could have sheltered hundreds of camels and many tons of merchandise. Even now it might

be put in repair at the expense of a few thousand dollars, but, I suppose, since the railway was built there is no use for it.

Kokand is a thriving city of 75,000 or 80,000 population — the largest, wealthiest and most important in the province of Ferghana east of Bokhara and Samarkand. That is the most fertile section of Turkestan, also, because of the water supply from the neighbouring mountains on the Chinese border. It is an actual example of "the desert blossoming as a rose." There is no more barren or lifeless-looking country on the face of the globe, outside of the limits of the oasis, but water will work miracles as wonderful as any that puzzle the readers of the Bible. And whoever refuses to believe in miracles in these modern days of skepticism, let him come here and see what the hand of the Creator can accomplish with the aid of engineering skill and money. But why come here? You can see the same miracle performed in the southern counties of California, around the sandy plateaus of Utah, or in any of the arid regions of the United States. Only the deserts seem wider and more desolate in Asia than they do at home. Life seems so much lonelier, because its ways are not our ways; genuine happiness is so far from the great majority of the people; and the experience of the races who have inhabited that section of the world since the beginning of time has been so full of cruelty, violence, death, and disaster and so bare of comfort and enjoyment, that nature seems less benevolent and more resentful than in our happy and hospitable land.

The desert ends here, however. As you go eastward the area of barren land is limited, and, indeed, there are more swamps than sand hills between Kokand and the Chinese

border. The foliage is splendid. It seems as if the trees grew faster and were more luxuriant in leaves and branches than anywhere else, and we can easily see from the car window why Ferghana has been called the most fertile province of Turkestan.

It was formerly an independent khanate and Kokand, which is 1,176 miles in a straight line east of the Caspian Sea, was its capital. It never was famous for anything in particular. It never possessed the influence or attractions of Samarkand or Bokhara, or rivalled their splendour in architecture or display of wealth, but its people have always been prosperous, and it has been much easier to make a living out of the ground here than anywhere else east of the Caucasus or the Volga Valley.

Kud-o-jar was the last of the khans, or kings of Kokand, and when the Russians approached his limited dominions he distributed the ladies of his ample harem among his friends, with the exception of a few favourites, and fled to Mecca, where he died four years later. His palace still stands, and is used by the Russians as a storehouse for military supplies. It is a cheap imitation of the splendid tile-enamelled buildings erected by Tamerlane and the moguls and is scarcely worthy of attention. Modern Kokand is much more interesting than the old native city, because it represents life and progress. There is something doing every day in the development of natural resources and in extending the wealth-producing capacity of the country. The population of the Russian town is about 10,000, who live on both sides of two long, wide, well-shaded streets named in honour of Skobeleff and Rosenbach, the Russian generals, who massacred more natives in the subjugation

of Turkestan than any others. A station on the railway near Kokand is also named in honour of Skobeleff.

The tendency of the earth to quake compels people to live in one-story buildings, but there is plenty of ground to spread them over, and, as in other Russian settlements of Turkestan, everybody has a garden and a grove, and surrounds them with high mud walls so that you can see only the tops of the trees. This is aggravating to a visitor who has heard of the artistic gardens and the beautiful lawns which decorate the homes of the wealthy people. Being the headquarters of the military governor of the province and his administrative staff, Kokand, like Tashkend, has a martial air, and the largest buildings are devoted to military purposes. The barracks are enormous; there are large warehouses and armouries and arsenals, hospitals and officers' quarters, a big Greek church, where the soldiers may seek salvation, a theatre where they may find diversion, a club where, it is said, the officers gamble and drink a great deal more than is good for them, and two fine schools for the education of the children of the military class, in which, fortunately, the civilians may share.

The Russo-Chinese bank and other financial institutions have branches there, and do a large business for the size of the town. I do not know another community of similar population that has an export trade of larger proportions and profits — chiefly cotton, wool, hides, Persian lambskins, and rugs — and the volume of imports seems unnecessary until you come to understand the vast quantities of merchandise of every sort that are shipped through the mountains by camel caravans into China. This business

is altogether in the hands of Jews, who have the reputation of being very rich, but $100,000 is considered a large fortune here. The natives own the camels and handle the caravans, the camel drivers being Turkomans or Persians, and the Jews furnish the freight.

The population of certain sections of China, on the eastern side of the mountains, is quite dense, and until the Central Asia Railway was built their limited supply of foreign merchandise came up the Yangtse River from Shanghai, being handled largely by English firms, but the Russians are gradually wresting the trade away. The Jewish merchants are very enterprising.

Kokand has had a monopoly of the paper and stationery trade in Turkestan for ages. This seems very odd. The average reader will consider it strange that the people inhabiting the deserts of Central Asia should need much stationery, but you must remember that for a thousand years Bokhara, Samarkand, Merv, and Khiva were centres of learning. They were the homes of famous scholars when Rome was a kindergarten and Athens was being taught to read, so to speak. If you will visit the libraries of the mosques of Constantinople or Cairo or any other city where Mohammedan scholarship still retains any vitality, you will find libraries of manuscript books of most exquisite penmanship, made a thousand years before Guttenberg was born, and the thick, fine, parchment-like paper upon which they are written was produced from linen rags at Kokand. People claim that the art of paper making was invented here, although I do not believe that is the case. The Chinese also claim the invention, and it is more likely that the Kokanders learned it from their neighbours over the

mountains, although Central Asia has been occupied by the human family quite as long as China.

However, practically the entire supply of the paper used by the empires of Central Asia, since they have had a literature, was manufactured in that town for the same reason that our finest stationery is made at Holyoke and that neighbourhood of Massachusetts — the quality of the water. The process used there would amuse a Holyoke paper manufacturer. They soak the rags in a strong lye, which causes the fibre to disintegrate, then they stamp it to a pulp about the consistency of library paste, which is forced through sieves of varying fineness, the smaller particles making the best paper and the larger particles a coarser variety. The pulp is spread out upon flat stones as thinly as possible, like a paste, covered with sheets of felt, held under weights until the moisture is squeezed entirely out of it, and is then calendared, or given a lustrous surface by washing it in a solution of gum. The paper trade is dying out, however. Since printing presses and type became so cheap it doesn't pay for even a monk to spend his time copying literary works with that marvellous patience and skill that is so much admired in ancient manuscripts. The art of penmanship is also extinct, and therefore there is no demand for hand-made paper.

Kokand, like Samarkand and Bokhara, was an educational centre for several centuries, and there are said to be fifty-six meddresses or colleges still existing there, but it is difficult to find them — quite as difficult as it is to find the 500 mosques the city is credited with. There are, however, several large colleges, the chief one, known as the Djammi, having 1,200 softas, or students. It has been liberally

endowed by rich men in the past and education costs nothing but the bare living expenses of the student.

Kokand is surrounded by prosperous villages of farmers, most of them being engaged in raising cotton, and there are many large flocks of black sheep and many Persian lambskins are shipped from that point. Everybody is engaged in doing something. There is no idle class except the dervish beggars. The wheat fields are large; much barley is raised; rye and oats were introduced by the Russians and extensive rice fields are to be found on the lower levels, although the Russian regulations will not permit them near the villages or towns because of mosquitoes and the miasma which are bred in the stagnant water.

I noticed that the bales of cotton are bound with steel wire instead of bands, as in the United States, which, I was told, is very much more economical. There is a cotton-compress at every railway station and on the larger plantations; all of them from the United States. It seems good to see the names of American firms printed in English letters. Russian signs and inscriptions make one giddy. The Russians use all of our letters and ten more, but some of them are reversed and the sign-boards over the shops look as if the alphabet was on a strike.

There is nothing more wonderful in all the world than the irrigation systems which have existed in Turkestan since that corner of the footstool was inhabited by mankind. Without them no living thing could have survived. Traces of ancient canals in what is now a hopeless desert, inaccessible to water from any source, convince the scientists who have made investigations there, that several rich and populous cities, and a large area of cultivated soil,

once existed where there is now no human habitation. Russian engineers have sought in vain to find means to bring water back to spots which were once under cultivation, and to adapt the canals and ditches which were a part of the irrigation system of the ancients, but have found it impossible to do so, and the only explanation is that the levels of the plateaus of the steppes have been elevated by earthquakes.

The province of Ferghana is watered by the Syr Daria, the River Jaxartes, frequently mentioned in ancient Greek history. It rises in a stupendous glacier in the mountains of China, and is fed by innumerable little rivers and brooklets from similar sources. The Zeraphan (also spelled Zarafshan), which waters Samarkand and Bokhara, comes from the same source.

Margilan, another new town, is pushing ahead so fast that it will soon be a rival of Kokand, and many civilians prefer it as a place of residence because the military element is absent. It lacks interest, however, except for a claim that old Margilan, the native town five miles from the railway station, and formerly called Takhala, was the home of Iskander Macedonsky — the Russian name for Alexander of Macedon. That enterprising gentleman undoubtedly went there on his India campaign. There is a tradition that the citizens, fearing he would loot their homes, sent out a delegation to offer him a hen and a loaf of bread, which are the Sart symbols of hospitality. Alexander, who was in the habit of fighting his way, was so pleased by this politeness that he asked permission to take the town under his protection, and he renamed it Margi-han — which means "bread-hen." That amiable incident may have happened, but the people impose upon human credulity when they tell

you that Alexander lived and died there and show you his grave.

The women of Turkestan do not work in the fields as in Russia, Austria, Hungary, and other European countries. Outdoor labour is impossible under Mohammedan restrictions, so they stay at home and weave rugs, mothers and daughters taking turns at the looms and managing between them to keep the shuttles humming all day long. Formerly they spun their own yarn, but they can buy it so much more cheaply now that they sell the wool from their sheep and get it ready dyed, or have it advanced to them by the commission men, or agents of the big rug houses in Bokhara, Constantinople, Smyrna, Samarkand, or Merv. Women and girls can earn about twenty cents a day rugmaking, but it is rather hard work. They use no patterns in weaving but work entirely from memory, which is not as difficult as it appears, because only two or three patterns are used in that part of the country. Each tribe, or, rather, all the tribes of a district, habitually use the same pattern and the same material, but there is a great difference in the quality of the rugs, according to the skill of the weaver.

Looms can be found in the kibitkas (tents of the nomad tribes), as well as in the houses of the mud villages which we saw from the windows of the cars at frequent intervals, and which look as if a hard rain would wash them into oblivion. The roofs are flat, thatched with reeds and straw and covered with earth, which catch the seeds that are floating about in the air, and with the slightest encouragement of moisture become flower gardens, often of exquisite beauty. We have seen roofs that were blazing scarlet because of the thick growth of poppies upon them, and others have looked as if

blankets of blue, purple and yellow blossoms had been spread upon them.

Previous to the Russian occupation the opium habit was very general, having been inherited from China, but the government took immediate and decisive steps to extirpate it, and the penalty for using as well as for dealing in the drug is very severe — virtually imprisonment for life; and when a native gets into a Russian prison for violating the Russian laws it is the end of him. He is seldom seen among his fellow men again. The only way in which the narcotic is used now, I was told, is in the form of a tea made from the heads of poppies, which are gathered from the house tops and the fields by old women and dried by hanging them from the ceilings of the cabins. When perfectly dry they are crushed with mortar and pestle and prepared like ordinary tea.

The mud huts reminded us of the Indian pueblos of New Mexico, but they are not so well built; nor are the mud bricks so hard or enduring as the adobe blocks of New Mexico and Arizona. The dwellings of the Sarts and other tribes of Central Asia are more like those of the fellahs of Egypt that you see on the desert along the banks of the Nile. The walls are windowless; all the light and air comes in through the door; the cooking is done outside, the floor is mother earth, and the furniture is limited to a few decrepit chairs and benches. The inevitable loom, with a half-finished rug on the frame, always occupies a prominent place.

The women who live in these humble habitations will not allow their faces to be seen under any circumstances. If strangers are so impertinent or tactless as to manifest any

interest in the feminine portion of a family, they usually suffer a severe penalty. The most serious troubles that have occurred with the natives have been caused by what they consider insults to their wives and daughters.

There is an eternal advantage in having an abundance of building material handy, because the habitations, even entire villages, crumble and are destroyed in an earthquake, but Central Asia could furnish mud enough to build that kind of dwellings for all the inhabitants of the world. The kibitkas of the Turkomans and the Kirghiz, and the tents of the Bedouins of Arabia are more convenient and comfortable than the cabins in the villages of Turkestan.

The present terminus of the Central Asia Railway is the ancient city of Andijan, at the foot of the Altai Mountains on the borders of the Chinese province of Tia-Shan-Nan-Lu, on the same parallel of latitude as Bombay. Where the future terminus of the railway may be is a problem. The track can be laid no farther eastward without crossing the Tian-Shan range of mountains, which would be very difficult and expensive. It is likely that the government of Russia would adopt a more practical right of way and build southeastward through Afghanistan, as described elsewhere, from Bokhara or Merv, to connect with the India railway system, or northeastward to connect with the Trans-Siberian Line from Tashkend.

Andijan is as far as anybody can go to the eastward without equipping a caravan, and Sven Hedin, the Swedish scientist, Colonel O. H. Crosby, of Washington, and other adventuresome explorers of Thibet have fitted out their expeditions there. There are large herds of camels engaged in transportation over the mountains to the important

Chinese cities of Kashgar and Yarkand, and the stores of Andijan are well stocked with supplies, but it is a difficult and a dangerous undertaking for a European or a white man to enter those mountains without a military escort, as both the gentlemen named can testify, and it is a hard road to travel even then. In sight of Andijan are several lofty peaks, Mount Kaufmann rising 23,000 feet, being the chief of a splendid battalion. On the Chinese side of the range, Mount Tagharama, 25,000 feet, is surrounded by several lesser peaks, and beyond it are the Himalayas and the ranges of Cashmere.

Andijan is the wealthiest and most important city east of Tashkend, the centre of a large oasis or irrigated district, which produces marvellous crops of cotton. It is virtually a rainless region, but abounds in mountain streams flowing from glaciers and the melting snow upon the peaks, and the soil is so fertile that it is only necessary to talk about water to see things grow. This section is developing more rapidly than any other part of Turkestan because it is easier and less expensive to build irrigating systems than in the desert farther away from the sources of water supply, and more land is being added to the cultivated area than in any other part of Central Asia.

The railway reached there in 1899, and for several years thereafter Andijan experienced something like an American or Canadian boom, although the government, as I have explained in previous chapters, does not permit promiscuous emigration and does not encourage people to go there to look for a living. They must take something with them or have contracts for employment. The natives, who are called Sarts, like those of Samarkand and Tashkend, grow

more and more like the Chinese in appearance as you approach the borders of that empire, and their features — flat noses, high cheek bones and narrow slanting eyes — leave no doubt of their Mongolian origin. Their dialect contains many Chinese words, showing the influence of that race, and the chai-khana, or teahouse, is found on every corner.

The consumption of tea throughout Russia is very large, but at Andijan we saw for the first time little shops like cafés exclusively for tea drinking. There are thousands of them in the bazaars. They are merely little holes in the wall, with rugs spread on the floors, samovars letting off steam in the corners, and rows of porcelain pots with caddies containing different qualities of the herb, from which the patrons help themselves. It is surprising the amount of tea one can purchase for a penny. Glasses are used as in Russia, instead of cups. The hotels are called "numeras," which means lodging houses, having licenses from the police for the entertainment of strangers, and each has a number by which it is known more generally than by the name. There is no general dining room, but meals are served in bedrooms at any hour if ordered a considerable time in advance. Guests are expected to furnish their own bedding and towels. The house provides the bedstead, usually a simple iron camp affair, and a husk mattress.

Andijan is the headquarters of a large band of Mohammedan dervishes, called Ishans, who go about the streets begging and sit at the street corners to pray for passers-by. It is considered a sacrilege for anyone to refuse them alms. They are regarded as holy men, and, although they are filthy, repulsive looking creatures, who never bathe or even

wash their hands or faces, and allow their long hair to become matted with grease and filth, they are treated with profound reverence by all classes. The natives fear their curses as much as the plague. These creatures come from Afghanistan and often from India, and tramp from town to town begging. They bring their collections to headquarters at Andijan, and the money is supposed to be forwarded from there to the monasteries of the sect at Herat or Kabul. Several years ago the chief of these Ishans was accused of plotting against the government. It is claimed that under his direction the itinerant dervishes attempted to organize a conspiracy to massacre the Russian garrison. He was arrested and hanged, and his followers fled to hiding places throughout the country, finding refuge in the homes of fanatical Mohammedans.

Shortly after this episode, on the night of Dec. 16, 1902, Andijan was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake. Three-fourths of the buildings were overthrown, or their contents ruined and all the villages in the neighbourhood were either entirely or partially destroyed. It is estimated that more than seven hundred and fifty lives were lost in that district. The houses were rebuilt at once, for the walls were only of mud, but the fanatical natives got the notion that the calamity was a manifestation of the displeasure of Allah at the execution of his servant, and the governor-general decided that it was good policy not to punish any more dervishes. For that reason the wretched creatures were permitted to return and are now as numerous and importunate as before. Although they are kept under the strictest surveillance, they are capable of much mischief.

But an earthquake was not an unusual experience for

Andijan. That part of the country is subject to such shakings. The city was entirely destroyed in 1812 and several times previous to that date. Earthquakes of more or less violence are expected occasionally throughout Turkestan, and the popular explanation of abandoned irrigation canals upon high plateaus where water cannot possibly reach them, is that uplifts of the surface of the earth have occurred in past centuries because of subterranean convulsions.

The most tragic tale ever told of these deserts is Thomas de Quincey's "Revolt of the Tartars; or, Flight of the Kalmuck Khan and His People From the Russian Territories to the Frontiers of China." It is one of the most admired examples in English literature; it is printed in the Student's Series of English Classics, and is recommended by professors of rhetoric as a model of literary style. At the same time the commentators warn their readers that De Quincey took many liberties with the facts and elaborated more than historical accuracy will justify. Nevertheless nothing more tragic ever occurred, and the story is founded upon a most extraordinary incident in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, the daughter of Peter the Great. In the year 1761 an entire tribe of Tartars, numbering 600,000 souls, left their homes near Astrakhan, in the valley of the Volga, and fled 3,000 miles across the desert with their wives and children, their horses, cattle, camels, sheep and all their portable property, and were pursued the entire distance by an army of merciless and relentless horsemen, with the single object of exterminating them before they reached their destination.

In reality, the flight was no revolt, but as De Quincey says, it was a return to their old allegiance; since in the year

1616 the ancestors of these people revolted from the Emperor of China, found their way westward across the desert and settled upon land given them by the Czar of Russia on the banks of the Volga River. There they had lived in prosperity, but not in peace, for a century and a half, subject to heavy taxation, military conscription and various other forms of persecution. Having tried both governments they were convinced that China was the land of freedom and Russia the house of bondage. De Quincey sums up the story in these words:

"There is no great event in modern history, or perhaps it may be said broadly, none in all history from its earliest records, less generally known, or more striking to the imagination than the flight eastward of a principal Tartar nation across the boundless steppes of Asia. The terminus a quo of this flight and the terminus ad quem are equally magnificent — the mightiest of Christian thrones being the one, the mightiest of pagans the other. In the abruptness of its commencement, and the fierce velocity of its execution, we read the wild barbaric character of those who conducted the movement . . . an exodus in so far resembling the great spiritual exodus of the Israelites under Moses and Joshua, as well as in the very peculiar distinction of carrying along with them their entire families, women, children, slaves, their herds of cattle and of sheep, their horses and their camels."

This flight was the result of a conspiracy on the part of an unsuccessful candidate for the throne of the Kalmucks, who induced them to undertake the exodus by misrepresentation, by a forged invitation from Kien Long, the reigning Emperor of China, and a forged document giving the movement the

sanction of the Dalai-Lama in Thibet. This tribe of Tartars belong to the Buddhist sect. They brought their religion with them from China when they went to Russia, and had suffered much persecution because of their adherence to it. The representative of the Dalai-Lama was a priest or bishop named Loosang, who not only declared the movement to be ordered by God, but fixed the date upon which it should take place.

On the 5th of January, 1761, the day solemnly appointed by the lama, the entire nation burned their homes and started eastward, driving their flocks and herds before them, accompanied by wagons and camels loaded with their household goods and agricultural implements, without dreaming of the terrible experience that awaited them. During the first week they made about three hundred miles. Then their departure having been discovered, the Russian government ordered a pursuit by a force of Cossacks. The first battle resulted in a terrible slaughter. It is said that not less than eighty thousand of the fugitives, including many women and children, were killed. Then began a race across the desert between the pursuers and the pursued, which continued all the spring and summer, until the horde, which started with about six hundred thousand men, women and children, was reduced to about two hundred thousand, two-thirds of those who started having fallen upon the desert, victims to famine, fatigue, heat, and the destroying scimitars of the Cossacks, the Kirghiz and the Bashkirs, the semi-savage nomads of Turkestan.

The Khan of the Kalmucks sent messengers ahead to notify the Emperor of China of the movement and the latter was hunting in the exterme western frontier of China when

the Kalmuck host, now in the last extremities of exhaustion, appeared. The first intimation of their approach was the clouds of dust that rose upon the horizon, and soon the scouts reported to the emperor that the pilgrims, who were three months ahead of their time, were pursued by their enemies. He therefore summoned all the military forces within call to the rescue of the fugitives.

During the last ten days they had been traversing a hideous desert and the horrors of thirst had driven them nearly insane. Therefore, when the fugitives and their pursuers came in sight of Lake Tenghis they rushed with maddening eagerness into the water, forgetful of all things but one mighty instinct. "But the next moment arose the final scene of parting vengeance," De Quincey writes. "Far and wide the waters of the solitary lake were dyed red with blood and gore. Here rode a party of savage Bashkirs, hewing off heads as fast as the swaths fall before the mower's scythe; there stood unarmed Kalmucks in a death grapple with their detested foes, oftentimes both sinking below the surface from weakness or from struggle and perishing in each other's arms. Every moment the water grew more polluted; yet every moment fresh myriads came up to the lake and rushed in, not able to resist their frantic thirst. Wheresoever the lake was shallow enough to allow of men raising their heads above the water, there, for scores of acres, were to be seen all forms of ghastly fear, of agonizing struggle, of spasms, of convulsions, of mortal conflict; death and the fear of death; revenge and the lunacy of revenge; hatred and the frenzy of hatred; until the neutral spectators, of whom there were not a few, averted their eyes in horror."

The Chinese cavalry came to the rescue of the fugitives and slaughtered all of the Bashkirs and Kirghiz who escaped from the lake.

"Here ends the tale of the Kalmuck wanderings in the desert," De Quincey concludes his story. "Every possible alleviation and refreshment for their exhausted bodies had already been provided by Kien Long with the most princely munificence, and lands of great fertility were assigned them in ample extent. Thus, after memorable years of misery, the Kalmucks were replaced in territorial possessions and in comfort equal, perhaps, or even superior to those they had enjoyed in Russia, and with superior political advantages."

CHAPTER XVII

THE RUSSIAN POLICY IN ASIA

WHEN we had "done" Turkestan thoroughly we hurried back to Krasnovodsk and took the first boat leaving for Baku. We were glad to get out of the country for several reasons, and feel safe in recommending it as a good country to keep away from. I do not like the climate or the location. The heat, the poor hotels, the dust of the desert and other discomforts are enough, if there were no others. Food is limited. We could always get good soup, eggs, vegetables, bread, coffee, tea and excellent fruit. The strawberries are the best I ever tasted, and the cherries are equally good. The meats, however, are very poor and the chickens are tough and stringy. Waldorf-Astoria prices are charged for everything in the way of food. We were told, before starting, that living in Turkestan was very cheap, but we found it more expensive than in London or Vienna or Paris. Our rooms at the shabby little hotels and our meals at railway restaurants and other places cost just as much as we would have paid at the most exclusive hotels in London or New York, which, of course, was exasperating; but, on the other hand, it is only fair to say that the people who keep the hotels and restaurants are compelled to charge high prices in order to pay expenses, and when a foreigner comes along they get as much of his money as they can.

The most annoying part of the experience, however, is

due to the unfriendly attitude of the officials. The Russian government does not want strangers to visit Turkestan, particularly Englishmen, and the average official is too ignorant or stupid to distinguish between the English-speaking races. It does not want newspaper or magazine writers. It does not want the country advertised. It has nothing to exploit. It maintains a strict policy of closed doors, and prefers to pick the immigrants and the capitalists who shall develop the material wealth of its Asiatic provinces. The reasons for this policy of exclusiveness are sound, from the Russian point of view.

In the first place, the Russians want Turkestan for themselves, as a market for their manufactured goods and as a source of supply for their raw material, and every dollar's worth of merchandise that is sold by a German or an Englishman is so much out of a Russian pocket.

In the second place, the Russian government does not want the natives interfered with. Its policy from the beginning of the conquest has been to protect and perpetuate the native customs, habits, and conditions, and to encourage the natives to go on as they are, illiterate, superstitious, antiquated in methods, and primitive in habits. It will not tolerate intruders or visitors who will make trouble or ask questions, and there is a chronic apprehension lest the British or the Germans will find out something that they can use to Russia's disadvantage.

There are good schools for the children of officials and military men and settlers, but the natives supply their own. The mullahs who teach them are illiterate; they can scarcely read anything except the Koran, and they have no knowledge whatever of modern learning or methods of education.

They do not know the difference between New York and London, or between an American and an Englishman. All foreigners look alike to them, and are barbarians. The Russian government does not prohibit native children from attending the schools that are furnished for the inhabitants of the Russian towns, and admits them free of tuition, and particular pains are taken to impress them with the greatness and the goodness and the far-reaching authority of the Czar. In other words, they are Russofied as thoroughly as possible.

The moral effect of the policy that has prevailed since the conquest is to leave the natives precisely as they are; to Russofy, but not to enlighten them. It is based upon the theory that their present condition is satisfactory and sufficient, and that any change will endanger their happiness and welfare. The advocates and defenders of this non-progressive, let-well-enough-alone method of treating the natives point to the political unrest in India and Egypt as evidence of the danger of enlightening the Oriental mind. No good, they say, will ever come of trying to introduce modern ideas into an ancient community. It is like putting new wine into old bottles, and the fermentation will result in explosions. So long as the natives are contented with their own methods and their own limited privileges and diversions they are satisfied, but when they learn that better conditions exist among other nations they become discontented, disloyal and unreliable.

What is the use of teaching a man that other people have advantages he cannot enjoy? they argue. It does no good and much harm to put false hopes into the mind of an ignorant man and encourage ambitions that can never be satisfied.

Ignorance is bliss, and the happiest communities are those which do not realize their own poverty and wretchedness.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Russians have improved the material condition of the native population of Turkestan. They have provided an excellent government, which is virtually home rule. The administration of the native cities and villages is intrusted to the hands of the people, who elect their own officials, assess and collect their own taxes, and are allowed to do exactly as they think proper, so long as the sovereignty of the Czar is acknowledged. There is no more misgovernment, as there was before the conquest of Central Asia, except in Bokhara. The contrast between the condition of Samarkand and Bokhara illustrates the beneficent disposition of the Czar. The courts are just and impartial. They protect the innocent and law-abiding and punish the guilty. In the Russian settlements there is no injustice or persecution from the officials and their favourites. Taxes are low. They are impartially assessed and honestly collected. The administration of municipal affairs in the native cities is entirely satisfactory to the people, and if there is any cause to complain an autocratic power, with argus eyes, very promptly detects and corrects the evil.

The construction of the railway, the establishment of manufactures and the introduction of labour-saving machinery has furnished a market for all the fruits of the labour of the people of Turkestan and enables them to get their products to market promptly and economically and to sell them at the highest prices. Formerly a farmer could not dispose of his surplus to any advantage. To-day there is a demand for everything that can be raised upon the ranches

or the farms of Central Asia. The introduction of American cotton seed and American tools and machinery for cultivating and treating the raw cotton has already doubled the wealth of the people and insures permanent prosperity for the agricultural element, because the factories of Moscow will absorb every ounce of raw cotton that can be raised and will pay the highest market price for it.

It is only necessary to compare agricultural conditions under the rule of the native emir in Bokhara with those created by the Russian officials in Tashkend and Samarkand to realize the enormous benefits that have been bestowed upon the farmers by the Russian government. The government of the United States has not done more to encourage and assist agriculture, except in the recently adopted reclamation policy, and the Russians are already talking of imitating that.

Turkestan is going to be the greatest competitor of the United States in the production of raw cotton, and sooner or later will become an important factor in the wheat and flour market.

The territory of Turkestan is more than half as large as India, extending from the fifty-second to the eightieth meridian east of Greenwich and from the Persian boundary to Siberia. The western boundary is the shore of the Caspian Sea, and the eastern borders are the mountains of China, India and Afghanistan. Speaking roughly, Turkestan is 1,600 miles long by 700 miles wide, and while 50 per cent of the territory is a hopeless desert and 30 per cent is so mountainous that the soil cannot be plowed, 10 per cent of the entire area is now under cultivation and as much more can be reclaimed without difficulty.

There are eight cities with more than a hundred thousand population. Tashkend has nearly two hundred thousand and many prosperous villages are scattered throughout the different oases which exist wherever water can be obtained.

Turkestan has the longest and two of the greatest rivers in Asia, and the irrigated area is being very rapidly extended by wealthy syndicates from Moscow, and other Russian cities, which are directly interested in the increase of the cotton supply.

If the Russian government had done nothing else for the country than plant the trees that have been set out since the conquest it would be entitled to rank as a public benefactor. At least thirty millions of seedlings have been set out around the different cities, and along the river bottom and irrigating ditches, and no one can tell how many millions more have grown from the seed.

Russia is the only nation in the world to-day that proclaims a policy of conquest, and its aggressiveness toward Turkey, China and other nations whose territory lies along its boundaries is quite as intense as it was in the days of Peter the Great. The railway over which we travelled, the highways which have excited our admiration, the vast accumulations of military stores we have seen in Turkestan and the Caucasus are a part of the inflexible determination of the Russian autocracy to extend the empire as rapidly as the opposition will permit. The failure of the Russian arms in the struggle with Japan and the recent treaty of peace and concord between those nations does not mean that Russia has given up its purpose to obtain a port upon the Pacific, and the friendly protocol between the Czar and the King of England has not caused any change in the Czar's

determination to annex Persia, Manchuria and ultimately India, to his empire.

At the accession of Peter the Great in 1682 the Russian Empire included 1,696,000 square miles in Europe and 3,922,000 square miles in Asia, with a population of about 11,000,000. At his death in 1725 it included 1,738,000 square miles in Europe, 4,092,000 square miles in Asia and a population of 14,000,000. At the present time it includes 2,110,436 square miles in Europe, 6,451,847 square miles in Asia, or a total of 8,562,283 square miles and a population of about 160,000,000.

I suppose the people of Turkestan in their habits of life and costumes are not much different to-day from what they were at the time of Tamerlane. There has been little change since the Russian conquest, and it seems to be the intention of that government to keep them as they are. This will afford an interesting and unique experiment in civilization. The question is, what will happen to those ten millions of people, who are permitted or required to remain in their ancient condition, while the rest of the world is developing so rapidly?

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